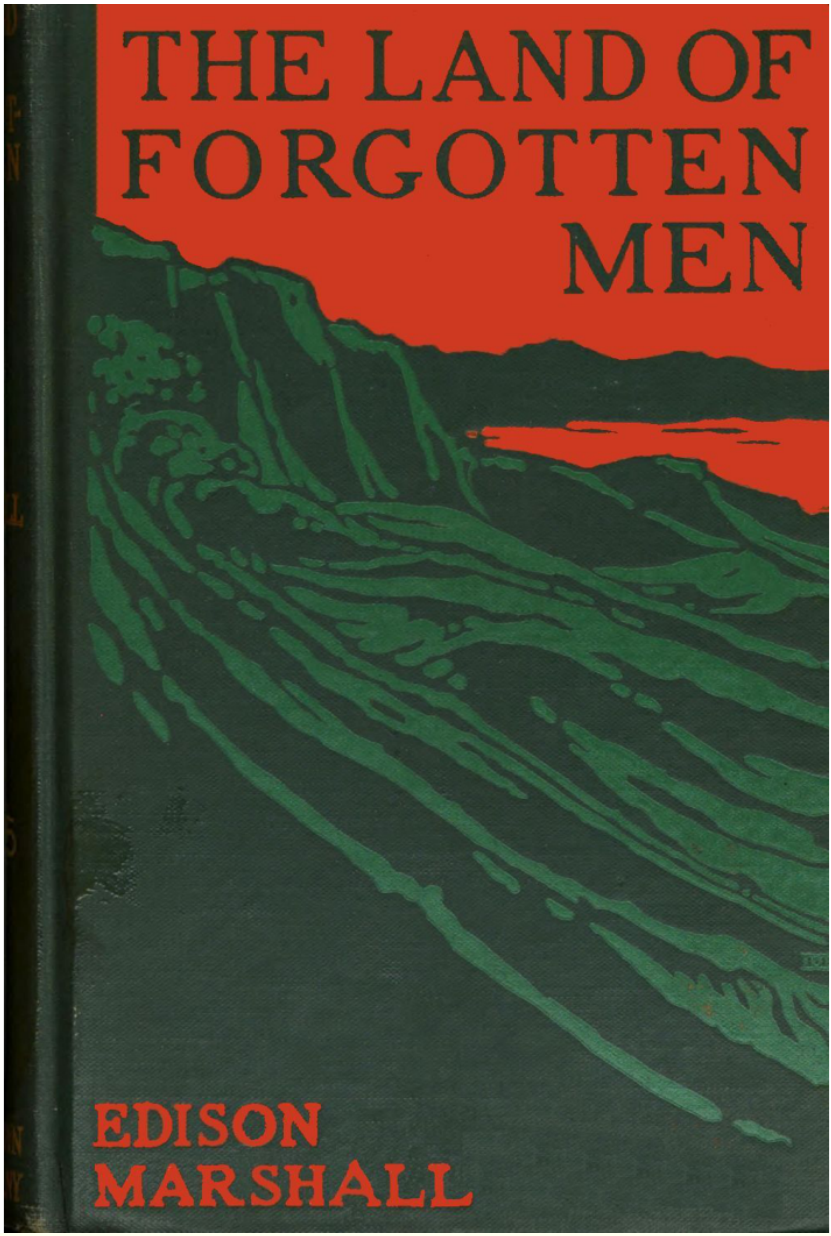
THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN



EDISON MARSHALL

The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Land of Forgotten Men

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: The Land of Forgotten Men

Author: Edison Marshall

Release date: February 16, 2026 [eBook #77968]

Language: English

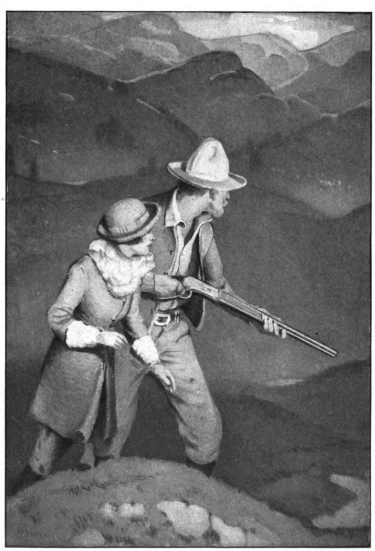
Original publication: Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1923

Credits: This eBook was produced by: Mardi Desjardins, Pat McCoy & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at https://www.pgdpcanada.net This file was produced from images generously made available by HathiTrust.

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN ***

By Edison Marshall

THE VOICE OF THE PACK
THE STRENGTH OF THE PINES
THE SNOWSHOE TRAIL
SHEPHERDS OF THE WILD
THE SKY LINE OF SPRUCE
THE HEART OF LITTLE SHIKARA
THE ISLE OF RETRIBUTION
THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN



Soon after she began the long stalk toward the caribou herd, at Pete's side.
FRONTISPIECE. *See page 153*.

THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN

By
EDISON MARSHALL

WITH FRONTISPIECE BY
W. HERBERT DUNTON

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1923

Copyright, 1923,

By Little, Brown, and Company.

Published August, 1923

Printed in the United States of America

THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN

CHAPTER I

THE idea came to Big Chris, as he stood on the beach gazing out through the narrow, darkened harbor mouth into the night and the storm, that this world of his was an outcast world, a land that God had cursed and forsaken, a pariah land outlawed from the kindly, sun-kissed world where the races moved and teemed. Because it was his home, because its grim, strange spirit of desolation and death had long ago got hold of him, it was as if he were a pariah too, God-cursed and God-forsaken, scarcely less so than the Remittance Man, with whom he had just become acquainted and who now lay in a drunken stupor in one of the tumble-down shacks in the darkened native village behind him; that because this land of his was lost and forgotten to the living world of men, it was as if he were lost and forgotten too, scarcely less so than the soul of some sailor drowned at sea, who now in the guise of a sea gull cried to him from the storm.

Such ideas did not haunt him often. He was huge and blond, and rugged—not a dreamer in any sense except as all men of the northern races, knowing life to its cruel depths, are given to dreams —and his last name was Larson. His job, that of a web foreman in connection with the fishing that was the one industry in these far, forsaken waters, kept him too busy for such moods as this. But the North was showing its teeth to-night. The very soul of his homeland was laid bare. Besides, he was inwardly ill at ease from purely material considerations—he had caught the cannery launch *Jupiter* at Nushagak, with the idea of connecting up with the mail boat at Squaw Harbor, the *Jupiter's* home port, in a race to the "outside", but the swift-breaking storm had forced the launch into a miniature cove far up in one of the most desolate and stormy stretches of seacoast in the entire North, there to remain for an uncertain time. The storms that break and beat on the rock-bound shores of the long, outstretching Alaskan peninsula are sometimes like a thunderclap, growing to incredible, earth-splitting intensity almost in a moment, and in a moment more paling and dying away. But sometimes they lock down upon the sea like a curse, not to lift for endless weeks, one upon another. His inner dismay enhanced the vague terror and threat that were born of the raging elements.

Of course it was only a squall in the tradition of seafarers. Captain Jim of the *Jupiter*—on the way home from a scouting trip for a new trap site—had driven his staunch little ship through seas twice as high. But Captain Jim did not care to take a chance when a mere passenger's haste was the only consideration. Shiels, at Bellingham, and Bradford at Squaw Harbor had given definite instructions against that very thing, needless risk of the lives of his crew. Yet, Chris had to admit that this was no night for landlubbers. The shelter of the harbor was dear to-night even to those cold-nerved, hard-sailing Vikings who manned the *Jupiter*. The North was showing its teeth,—and the fangs of this particular remote and outcast portion of the North, Big Chris's immediate range, were cruel and sharp.

In all his travels he had never known a land quite like this narrow, treeless, storm-blasted peninsula that was the fence between the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea. Perhaps that was why he hated it, and by a grotesque paradox that no mind such as his could ever explain, loved it too. The night so grim and mysterious about him, which laid such queer, dreadful pressure upon his eyeballs, was wholly characteristic of this outcast land. In the first place it was bitterly, savagely cold. The hill behind him sheltered him from the lash of the wind, yet he felt that odd dryness in his head that always marks zero weather, and the icy touch of the frost, as of a hand, crept under his heavy shirt. He wished he had his heavy sea-coat that he had left in a cabin in the village. Thence his thought turned to the Remittance Man, wondering how he was making out. It is not wise, on the Peninsula, to soak oneself in distilled sour dough and then lie in the cold. This was November: he made a bet with himself that the Remittance Man—granting that he sustained the drinking pace he had set and which, because it surpassed all records in this hard-drinking land, was already famous clear to Nushagak—would not participate in the Russian festival with which all far-western Alaska celebrates the Christmas season. There were some weeks to go before that time, and the man's pace was astonishingly swift. The human body, sturdy though it is, can stand only so much poison; and besides, the Remittance Man had careless habits or he would not now be lying in drunken stupor in an unheated cabin. It occurred to Chris that he might make his way to the shack, gather the man's no-insignificant bulk upon his own brawny shoulders, and carry him to the warm forecastle of the

Jupiter. There was, however, very little to be gained by such action. The stranger had resolutely started upon the enterprise of drinking himself to death in the most expeditious fashion possible, and Big Chris saw no reason why he should interfere.

Yet for all the depth of killing cold, the sky was such as would delight lovers in far-distant, tropic gardens. It was part of the fiendish perversity of this land's gods that they should crown such a night of cold and travail with a perfect bewilderment of stars. The sky was absolutely clear, and the hosts of heaven were in array. They were bright and sharp, and some of them hung so low it was easy to imagine them as ship lights in the *Jupiter's* tops. There was only the palest wisp of a waning moon, yet its light enabled him to make out dimly the wan, white, restless crests of the waves. Beneath this, and to the left and right, in the foreground and behind him, was only the pale darkness, dusk with no varying tones that seemed infinite as death.

The strange sense of solitude that is the eternal tone of the North had hold of him, and the same with every white man in the launch crew in the harbor. Only the Remittance Man, lost in drunken sleep, was immune. He felt deeply and eternally alone. It was true that there were human beings in plenty in the huts behind, but these did not count; they were Aleuts, curse-ridden and lost in the dark-age superstitions that were all they had left of a virile religion that had once spread to them from the Far East; and their presence did not in the least break the spell of solitude. They were a race apart, and he had never got close to them. Even the Remittance Man had never sought human companionship among them; and an echo of breeding and pride of race had kept him from crossing his blood with them. Even this renegade, from the States, was not accused of this.

As he watched, the storm seemed to increase; the beat of the waves on the rocks had a deeper, more sinister sound. How long would he be tied up here! He had the sensible notion to follow the Remittance Man's example and forget his predicament, the storm, and all the moods it had brought, in sleep.

Yet it was not to be that he should lie in his bunk, or that the *Jupiter* should lie in safety in the harbor. The darkness without the harbor was suddenly split by a queer, upward-darting flare of light.

The signal came from far away, evidently from off the rock-ribbed shore miles farther up the Peninsula, but the clear, icy air enabled him to distinguish it with entire plainness. He stood almost motionless, peering. There was only a short wait. Then he saw the yellow flare again.

The *Jupiter's* course was decided for her. She was not to lie in the snug cove, nor yet to carry her eager passenger to the home shelter of Squaw Harbor. Big Chris stepped to the water line.

"Captain Yim!" he called.

His voice, ringing and low, carried easily to the launch in the little harbor. Captain Jim stepped to the door of his pilot house, and his reply rolled back out of the darkness like a wave out of the dark sea. "Yas"—he said, and only the droll flattening of the *a*—always marked among men of Scandinavian birth—saved from sublimity that full, mysterious sound.

"Did you see dat light?"

"No——"

"Den look. East by nort'east——"

They watched, and the rocket made a long, yellow path through the darkness. There was no immediate change in Captain Jim's expression. Really he had only two expressions—he either smiled or he did not smile—and this was no occasion for smiling. Rather it was an occasion for him and his crew to get straightway and immediately busy, with no large amount of confusion and no discussion or heroics whatsoever. He reached a hand and sounded a gong that told his chief engineer to stand by. Then he gave certain other orders—brusquely, bawlingly, as was his habit.

"Before you take in dat skiff come in and put me aboard!" Big Chris called from the darkened shore. It was not that he had any delusions in regard to this cruise of the *Jupiter*. The launch would not head toward its home port; nor would there be any great thrill in battling these angry waves. The far-western Alaskan does not seek thrills of this kind, he hates them with an unholy hate; but it is not the code of the land to turn from them when the need arises. If Big Chris had kept silent, the captain might have pushed out and forgotten him; they had met only a few days before, and therefore had no instinct to turn to each other in a crisis. However, it did not

so much as occur to him that he could refrain from answering personally that distress call from the deep; or that he was entitled to any special credit for doing so.

Captain Jim's brain moved deliberately and slow, but certain as yoked oxen. It was true, he knew, that no seconds were to be wasted in reaching that sinking ship. Yet every available man would be needed in the work of rescue, and particularly great-muscled, "scookem" fellows, such as he had observed Big Chris to be. At his command one of his meager crew pushed off in the skiff and, standing bent in the boat, rowed in swift, sure strokes to the shore.

Big Chris was standing ready to jump in, but he paused for one instant. "Is dar nobody else in dis village wort' taking?" he asked.

"No. The storekeeper's a cripple, but Lord, he'll be mad. There's only one other white in the village, and that's the Remittance Man. Get in."

It did not occur to either of them that they should take natives on this rescue trip. This was a white man's job, and it would take the white man's steel of heart. The term "white" itself was here used in a most restricted sense: it referred only to the strong-hearted Northern races,—Americans of the basic stock, and the Nordic peoples of the British Isles and North Europe, never to the lesser breeds. And they would not even go to see about the Remittance Man. Surely he was too lost to manhood and self-respect to be of any aid in this night's work.

But they were suddenly brought up sharp in their work of pushing off by a voice in the darkness behind them. "Wait a second, you fellows," the voice said. It was abrupt, almost commanding in tone, and there was the sound of hurrying feet in the snow. "I want to go."

Even his irremediable disgrace—a disgrace that the northern men guessed at, but never knew in full—had not destroyed a certain quality of charm in the Remittance Man's voice. It was a rich, full baritone, and it had an irrepressible boyish quality, a frankness and open-heartedness that appealed instinctively even to these hard-fisted men of the North. The Remittance Man was from "the States", and the particular section of which he was native could usually be recognized by his accent: a softening of hard consonants and

mellowing of vowels that is indigenous to the country south of the Mason-Dixon line. Like all Southerners he habitually dropped his R's, but the absence of any pronounced drawl placed him further as of the South Atlantic States rather than the Southwest. The two men in the boat heard no thick speech to show his drunkenness. The sound of his step was unsteady: the darkness hid all other signs.

In an instant his great breadth pushed between them. The two men tried to probe the dusk to see his face.

"Are you sober?" the man from the *Jupiter* asked bluntly.

"Not entirely," was the answer. "Sober as I ever am. I'll be sober as a saint by the time we get out to that sinking ship."

"Then pile in. Push off, Larson."

In a moment more all three were aboard the *Jupiter*, the powerful, rugged engines had begun to rumble, and the launch was struggling out to sea.

Captain Jim, at the wheel, steered straight out until he was comparatively out of danger of close-lying reefs and shallows, then turned east. Until now he had not realized the full power and height of the waves. It was a strange thing, awe-inspiring, for all his long years at sea, thus to be tossed about under that clear, marvelous sky of stars. He was not aware of any feeling of actual fear other than the dismay and apprehension for the lives of his crew that in many crises he had known before. Yet the whole tone of his thought was darkened, and his fancy took odd turns unique with him.

It was a strange voyage. The launch shuddered as if in great dread. He was a northern man, and the love of the sea was in the fiber of his being; but there was no joy to-night in this battle under the star-studded welkin. He found himself wishing that he was like that unexpected passenger, the Remittance Man, too near drunk really to understand. He had a deep feeling against going on—not fear, but rather a secret knowledge that he could not trace—and yet he could not turn back. It was not in him to turn the wheel and steer back to the harbor when those yellow rockets signalled for help. The laws of the sea are few and old, but they hold like iron shackles. It was not that he went on against his will: that he could not, if he had so desired, find excuses to turn back. Men obey the sea laws through love, not through hate; and it was simply part of

him, and part of all the sea breed that he represented to push on in answer to that signal in the darkness. But he wondered that the Remittance Man should voluntarily choose to come. His thought was that the man must be too drunk to know.

Indeed, Captain Jim's thought sped faster to the rescue than his towering body, borne on the struggling launch, could possibly follow. He wanted to make greater speed, and now that the wind was fair he saw the way.

He turned to Big Chris Larson—mostly a stranger to him but yet one of his own hard-sailing breed. "Are you a sailor?" he asked.

The man stood up from the bunk where he had been bracing. "Yas, sir," he answered, with instinctive respect. "I sail in win'-yammers for ten year——"

"There's no reason we shouldn't spread her canvas. The wind's fair, and that little mainsail will help to hold her steady. Get out on the deck. I'll give you Eriksen to help."

Big Chris turned toward the door. Captain Jim smiled dimly when the Remittance Man got up too.

"You are no sailor," he commented.

"Nope! That part of my education was neglected. But any one who has done as much fancy balancing to keep his feet as I have in the last year will be a steady man in the tops! I'll go out and be in that big Norwegian's way."

The mellow, easy voice some way heartened the man at the wheel. His pale blue eyes frankly studied the handsome, clean-cut face, now plainly revealed in the light of the pilot house. This Southerner had wasted the birthright of a powerful physique. He was a tall man, extremely broad of shoulder and big of bone, and a careless glance might have attributed to him even such physical power as that of Big Chris whom he resembled greatly in build. But there was no iron in those big, loose muscles. Instead of possessing really an imposing physique, he was merely forty pounds overweight. Captain Jim's own weight was about a hundred and seventy; the Remittance Man's should be approximately the same.

There was still, in his face, the lingering image of what had unquestionably been a general allowance of real, manly good looks.

He had never possessed that effeminate prettiness that so enrages men: rather it was a combination of clean-cut, regular features, a clear complexion, wide-open, friendly Nordic eyes, sea blue, firm mouth and good, white, sound teeth, and most of all, an arrangement of facial lines that told of friendliness and humor, kind-heartedness and chivalry. The captain's gaze was quick and penetrative to-night, and he could see back into the man's past: he could see the man of which this half-drunken, dissipated creature was the image. Far away, and not long ago, he had been a youth of the greatest personal charm: well-bred, perfectly mannered, affectionate and good-natured; amiably weak yet chivalrous, quick to sympathy, kind and friendly to inferiors but recognizing no superiors; a certain well-loved type of Southern gentleman of an old school. What a social favorite he must have been! How the old, colored servants—Captain Jim could picture them—must have adored him and blessed him for his boyish, ready smile! He had not been all weakness: he had a firm, well-pronounced chin, a sensitive long-fingered hand that indexed certain strength of character; and there was a lingering spark in his dulled, bloodshot eyes that, in years agone, surely had been the mark of high and undaunted spirits. It perhaps might also be the key of a violent temper that could have easily brought him to his present pass. Surely the man had some vestige of courage, or he would not now be offering to go out on that storm-swept deck.

Curiously enough the man was clean-shaven; and the only explanation was that the lingering image of self-respect that kept him from crossing his blood with the Aleuts also kept him personally well-groomed. His beard, however, would have been decidedly brown; his shock of curly hair was light brown.

"All right," Captain Jim pronounced at last. "Go out and help Big Chris all you can."

The Remittance Man turned in obedience, and the tilting, wave-washed deck brought him to sobriety quickly. The danger, the night and the stars, most of all the eternity of plunging waves on which the ship was borne wakened an odd, dark mood, stranger to him in all the reckless, happy years of his youth. It was not merely the despair that had cursed him so many nights since his flight to the North: those terrible black hours between one debauch and another in which he had often been driven to the very brink of suicide.

Mental agony at what he had lost, the nervous torture of his poisoned body had no part in this; rather it was merely an image, a dream born of a new reaction to this eerie world that had come to be his home. Some way he saw this North of his in a new light. For the first time since he had come here, he was sober enough to catch the real tone, to feel the spirit of these desolate seas and the eerie, savage, rock-bound shores they washed. He had never thought about them in particular before. He had simply lived in a nightmare world of drink, and all the stern magic of this land had passed him by. But he was receptive to it to-night. It stirred him: had it not been hopelessly crushed long since, a fighting spirit might have been wakened in him. It was all like a dream—the wild billows, the struggling ship, the flitting forms of the deck crew and his own half-realized efforts to obey their commands, that breath-taking serenity of stars—and yet, as he dreamed, he saw more clearly than ever before. As to Big Chris, earlier in the night, the soul of the North was laid bare.

It was such a mood as could easily hurl him into tragic regrets if he had let himself go—if he had not long ago forsworn all regrets. In the first place there was no particular act of his—not even the tragic outcome of the launch ride on the Savannah River—to which he could directly attribute his downfall: it had really been a combination of circumstances, many of which had been beyond his direct control. Men regret their errors more than their crimes, and while many times he had said, “Lord, have mercy upon me, a fool,” he had not often begged forgiveness for innate failings and frailties that had led to his ruin. It is opportunities lost, wrong roads taken, that waken in human hearts that unspeakable bitterness that is regret, rarely the fortune that an inexorable destiny has imposed; and really it was destiny that was hounding the Remittance Man to his death. He did not believe himself a wicked man: he knew men in plenty not half so kind or chivalrous or brave who still enjoyed the world’s good fortune. It was hardly retribution in his case. He had been weak, true enough—drinking rather too much than was good for him, but no more than other men of his class, and not one-tenth as hard as he was drinking now in forgetfulness. He had been jealous with little cause; but this was also a human trait. It was simply that—for all his auspicious beginning, his care-free youth and the wonder of those first, ineffable months with Dorothy—the cards of fate had been stacked against him. So it was neither wise

nor fitting that he should yield himself to regret. There was surely nothing to be gained by so doing: it was not as if some way were open to him yet. By the same token he was not receptive to the fighting spirit that these fighting seas otherwise might have wakened in him. He could fight till he died; but the deed on the river would not be undone, and the road back to hope and self-respect and to all that mattered in life would remain closed and barred. There was no use of fighting when there was nothing to win. He could never go home. He must always be a fugitive from the world of men. He could never go back among his own kind: he could not even meet and work with rugged, worthy, though humbler men such as now toiled beside him except, of course, in these forgotten ends of the world where no one knew him or inquired whence he had come. These men would some time go back to God's country. He must stay here till he died.

It seemed to him now that this ultimate end was nearer than he had ever dreamed. There was a strange sense of finality about this voyage. It seemed to him that the idea reached him telepathically from the men of the crew—something hidden in their words, their motions, in their even, placid faces as they stood on watch—rather than by his own cool appraisal of their dangerous situation. It was true that these were deadly waters in such a squall as this, but that alone would hardly account for the fatal atmosphere that he so plainly felt. He wondered if the seamen, knowing their situation better, sensed an imminent danger to which he was blind.

The small sail was spread and gave its aid to the laboring engine, serving particularly to keep the craft on a more even keel. The ship sped faster into the night and the storm. The passing hours had brought them close to the sinking ship; the flare of rockets seemed just at hand. And now, with less activity, the Remittance Man began to realize the real severity of the cold.

The wind was like a whiplash out of the northwest, stinging his eyelids, buffeting him as he braced himself on the tilting deck, seeking every little entrance through sleeve and collar into his vitals. In the loneliness of his mood it did not occur to him at once that his fellow watchman might be likewise suffering. He only knew the truth when Big Chris paused beside him, cursing.

"God, I wish I had my coat," he said. "Like dam' fool I lief it in

dat native's shack——"

The Remittance Man gazed at him in quick amazement. It was true: Chris's heavy mackinaw shirt alone saved him from the lash of the cold.

"Good Lord, I wish you'd take mine," the Remittance Man answered promptly. "I'm sweating like a horse——"

He saw the look of incredulous amazement in Larson's face. "Yas, you are——" he began in derision.

"I am, no fooling. I guess it's the liquor—besides, I've got a caribou shirt underneath." He quickly threw off his heavy seaman's coat and held it out. "Wear it a while, anyhow—we're about the same build and it will fit you to a T. I'll holler for it back as soon as I feel chilly."

Big Chris muttered, but slipped the garment on. He could not doubt those ringing words; otherwise wild horses could not have forced the coat across his brawny shoulders. Presently he turned away, leaving this man of cities almost unprotected in the blast of the wind.

Why he had acted as he did, he could not have told. The dying liquor had chilled him, rather than warmed him, nor was there any shirt of cold-defying caribou hide under his outer garment of heavy flannel. If there had been a thought that Chris's life was worth saving while his own was not, that this working man was needed upon the earth while he himself was but a drunken semblance of what had never been more than a waster and an idler, it did not reach the focus of his consciousness: he had acted thus because it was his inner law. It had been simply an impulse, born of that instinctive chivalry that is the Southern birthright; and yet, in any other eyes but his, it would have emphasized the tragedy of his fate as much as any other act in his life, simply because it showed that, after all, he possessed one of the qualities of greatness. This was one trait for which even his rivals had always given him credit—a warm-hearted generosity that is the finest tradition of his homeland —and now it was ineffably ironical that his greatest virtue might easily be the means of his destruction.

He could not exist long in such cold as this. The frost seemed to penetrate his vitals. The dawn was breaking over the sea, incredible

after this night of storm and darkness; but it brought no mercy from the cold. Either he must leave his watch and seek shelter below, or else perish on the deck.

He turned, at last, toward the pilot house; but it was the strangest thing in all his strange life that he had little real desire to go. It was not that he was vitally needed on the deck. Rather, it was an outgrowth of the night's dark mood; he had seen the end toward which he was drifting all too plain. At least there would be some semblance of decency in such a death,—to be stricken lifeless by the cold in his keeping of his watch. There was none at all in the ghastly, creeping, delirious end that waited him in his hovel in the native village: the destiny of all men who lived as he lived. There was some quality of redemption in meeting his end in such work as this, humble though his part in it was.

But the Remittance Man never reached the pilot-house door. There was one strange, bewildering, blinding instant of incredible stress, a quick, cracking, explosive sound that hardly had time to reach his ear drums, and then the swift realization, like a rocket's flare, of irrevocable disaster. Where it lay and whence it had come there was no time exactly to know. The ship reeled, rent, the cruel crags ripped, caught, hurled it over; and the dark waves, foam-crested, roared, plunged, and smothered it in an instant. The man's lips opened in one despairing cry; and then he was swept and hurled into darkness.

CHAPTER II

FROM DOROTHY NEWHALL'S favorite chair, where often she sat cross-legged like a tailor, she could look through the broad library window, across velvet lawns and a flowering hedge, and thence straight down the long, white boulevard of Walton Way. It was characteristic of a certain part of her that in late years had come into the ascendency that she preferred this view—that which surveyed the fashionable traffic of the boulevard—to that from the wide glass spaces of the sun parlor, the vista of dark pines, deep in shadow, and the fields surrendering to the ardor of the Georgia sun. Dorothy's father-in-law had contrived the sun parlor for his own delight, and in his lifetime had been rather intolerant of the stream of motor vehicles that flowed ceaselessly up Augusta's most fashionable street; but they were all part of Dorothy's life. To-day she saw the colored messenger boy, pedaling stiffly up the grade, before ever he had passed the great, fashionable tourist hotel on the brow of the hill.

She had time in plenty to watch him, and nothing better to do. She clasped her slender, lovely hands—hands that might have come to life upon a Da Vinci canvas—under the delicate curve of her chin, lowered her wonderful violet eyes, and watched. The boy did not look for house numbers as she rather expected him to do. Evidently he knew just where he was going, likely to some famous house like her own. Her gaze had been half-dreamy before, but now it was suddenly, surprisingly alert. Since tragedy had overtaken this household, something over a year before, she had had full cause to watch for telegrams. A swift premonition told her that the boy was heading straight toward her door.

The fact she had felt the same fear on many previous occasions and it had always come to nothing did not lessen the poignancy of the moment. She had no great sense of surprise when the boy turned into her own beautifully curving driveway, circled to the wide veranda, leisurely propped up his wheel, and passed beyond the range of her vision as he mounted the veranda steps to her door. Dorothy got up slowly from her chair. It required some effort to move so slowly; and she did it only to convince herself that she had not yet yielded entirely to the surging fear that clutched her

heart. She walked freely through the door, took time to glance once at a great bouquet of flowers, and her hand was steady as she signed for the message. Then her fluttering fingers tore it open.

The next moment was a blank forever in her life. She had no memory of that first reading; yet when consciousness streamed back to her, a moment later, she lay half-sprawled over the great settee in the alcove just off the hall, and she knew the burden, if not the exact wording, of the message.

The yellow slip still lay in her hand. She did not look at it at once. Instead she lay with closed eyes, and the world swept through space, and time moved as in the grayness of half-sleep. She raised her hand slowly, and the message came with it; and slowly, laboriously, she read it through again.

It had been filed in the wireless office at Pirate Cove, in Alaska —a place of which she had never heard—and had unquestionably come by wireless to Seattle, whence it was sent by wire across the continent. It did not mince words:

MRS. PETER NEWHALL,
Walton Way,
Augusta, Georgia.

Papers found on dead body of man picked up on beach identify him as Peter Newhall of Augusta, Georgia, though known locally by another name. Death resulted from drowning and mutilation by reefs. He left instructions for immediate burial also that you be notified and personal effects be sent you. These are being forwarded. Body was embalmed and given decent burial by my crew near place of finding. If I can be of any other service please command me.

CAPTAIN JOHANSEN,
Steamer *Norwood*.

Just yesterday, it seemed to her, in girlhood, she had tried to imagine how she would receive such news as this,—the sudden taking-off of some one she loved. To conceive of such a thing had been almost impossible to her. Yet here it was, bald-faced on the

yellow paper; and still the boulevard lay white under the winter sun; she still moved and breathed, smelled flowers and knew the onward march of time. No tears came yet; instead only a limitless amazement. Indeed her eyes felt dry as the hand after too many immersions in water.

She *had* loved this man who had died. No one dared deny that. It was true that he had often failed to understand her—that he was careless of her needs, that he had been insanely jealous without cause—but she had loved him and had continued to love him throughout all those cold, hard weeks before the tragedy, after his drinking had ceased being a joke to her and her friends and had become a subject avoided in his presence. He had failed to understand her, to recognize the artist-self in her that demanded expression and companionship, yet she had given him her love, her hand, a few of her best years,—indeed, all she had to give. She had done her part; and no blame could be laid on her. She had been faithful to him, and faithful until now to the image that her mind kept of what he had been.

At present it did not occur to her that she had perhaps failed to understand him, too. Her thought had never taken this bent; indeed she was not trained to imagine another's point of view. Fortunately it was a matter of training only, not innate selfishness. There was no hint of selfishness in her wide-open, frank, clear eyes of such a marvelous violet hue; no evil lines about her lips or running vertically between her fine, silken brows; nothing but friendliness and open-heartedness in the habitual curl of her red, rather petulant mouth. But this mouth was not curling now. The news typed on the yellow slip had gone home, and she realized that this matter of mutual understanding between herself and Peter was closed and done forever. Their great problems had been instantly, tragically solved.

She read the message again. It had been sent from Alaska, the far North, thousands of weary miles distant from her and thousands of miles farther from the corner of the earth where she had thought he had been hiding. She had not dreamed but that he had fled to South America, as Ivan Ishmin had advised. Certainly he had gone to Savannah and had boarded the disreputable trader of which Ivan had told him; but some adventure of the journey had fetched him up in the far North rather than in Rio de Janeiro. The letters Ivan

had given him to his great friends in the Brazilian capital—letters to facilitate his flight back to the frontier—had evidently been no use to him, after all.

For months past Dorothy had lived in constant fear of his capture. Such news she had expected in the telegram to-day, that in spite of Ivan's heroic efforts to cover up the fugitive's tracks, the arm of the law had seized him at last. Ivan had withheld his testimony to the very last, running the risk of being haled into court himself on the charge of assisting a murderer to escape, not telling the tragic story of what he had seen and taken part in on the deck of the motor boat until it was veritably forced from him at the inquiry several days later, but she had not dared to believe that Peter could escape the hue and cry that was subsequently raised. But now this was over, at least. Peter could never be brought to earthly justice. He could not be brought back in irons, nor could he return to her in any way at all. This was the close of the whole, tragic chapter. He had been destined for tragedy, this laughing husband of hers; and surely she had shared in it to the full. But this was the end, even as she might have expected.

The truth grew upon her like a cloud advancing over the horizon of her thought. It was dim, at first, hardly to be believed; but now the knowledge was like a stone wall, not to be crossed or encircled. Swift, stabbing darts of pain began to pierce her heart at ever narrowing intervals: they seemed like actual blades of steel.

The full shock of such news as this scarcely ever sinks home at once. Rather it was like a bullet wound, blunting at first, but later shriveling the body with pain. Dorothy was known, throughout her beautiful resident city, for the unfailing loveliness of her appearance—eyes always bright, cheeks flushed, quaint frocks dainty and fresh, bobbed curls, clustering in dark glory about her head and around her childish, slender neck and throat—but her nearest friends would hardly have known her now. The lovely dull-red glow on her brown cheeks had faded, her sensuous mouth was drawn and haggard with agony, her eyes like dark blotches below the brows. The realization of what had occurred deepened and spread until it filled her known world. It was like a great weight that crushed her, remorselessly, to the earth.

She bowed her lovely, bobbed head into the cushion of the

divan; and the blessing of tears was hers at last. The long hours of the afternoon dragged away. She was miserably alone: her mother was out of the city, even old Rose, her colored mammy, did not know of her grief and thus could not come to comfort her; and Ivan —on whom, in these past months, she had begun to lean—was in high communion with the gods as, his violin tucked under his clear-cut chin, he practiced lovingly in his studio.

She was aroused at last by the sharp ring of the telephone bell and the shuffling steps of Nora, the second girl, who went to answer it. A moment later the servant came to the doorway.

"He say it's Mistah Ishmin," the servant told her stolidly. "He want to know if you feel like comin' to de 'phone——"

Dorothy hesitated, started to instruct Nora to repeat a message, then got up and went to the 'phone herself. Ivan would be quick to come to her when he knew the tragic contents of the telegram. He was always a strong arm to lean on: even Peter had granted him this. Yet the expected surge of relief at his calling did not immediately materialize, and the groping sense of loss remained.

"My dear girl, I have just heard the awful news," he began in his gentle, comforting voice. Even over the 'phone she caught the dim hint of his accent,—an almost imperceptible purring tone that went through every sound, like the eternal murmur that woodsmen hear, running through the silence of the forest. No man of her acquaintance spoke such perfect English; indeed his speech was more classic and refined than any one of her American-born friends. The fact that he was native of a far, mysterious country enhanced him in her eyes rather than prejudiced her against him. The tone was full, overflowing with consideration and feeling for her; and she wondered anew at the refinement, the wonderful modulation of his well-bred voice. No wonder that voice won women's hearts. It was a highly flexible organ, reflecting perfectly every shade of his mood. "I just read it, in the papers," he went on, "and I'm wondering if it would make you feel worse to have me come out ——"

"I want you to come very much," she answered simply.

"Perhaps you'd rather wait—I could come out later just as well —you can 'phone me when you want me," he went on, in his

instinctive, well-bred effort to put her at her ease. “Maybe you’d like to be alone for these first hours, but if, later, I can help in any way, I am always ready.”

“No, I really want you to come.—And bring the Stradivarius, if you will. I think it will help—to hear that.”

Ivan hung up, and as she waited for him to come she sent Nora after the latest paper. She had not expected that the news would be made public so soon. Evidently it was no longer her own secret, but had been sent by wire around the world. She found the article on the first page, and saw with relief it was entirely fair:

> Pirate Cove, Alaska, December 2nd—The body of Peter Newhall, of Augusta, Georgia, was picked up dead on the beach on the north coast of Alaska Peninsula. He was a victim of the wreck of the cannery-boat *Jupiter* that went to pieces on the rocks in her effort to aid the auxiliary schooner *Vigten*, which was in distress.
>
> -
>
> The above news came as a great shock to the entire city to-day. Mr. Newhall was a member of one of the South’s most ancient and distinguished families; and although the last part of his life has been overtaken with tragedy, his friends remember him for the good friend, chivalrous gentleman, and social favorite that he was throughout the years of his young manhood.
>
> Peter Newhall was born in this city thirty-six years ago, the son of Col. Newhall of Gettysburg fame. He was married two years ago to Miss Dorothy Stanhope of Savannah.
>
> The affair that led to his downfall occurred in a motor-boat party on the Savannah River a year ago last summer. According to testimony brought out at the inquiry Peter had sought a bitter quarrel with Mr. Ivan Ishmin, a violinist of international fame who was spending the season at Aiken, South Carolina. When the men were at the verge of blows, Paul Sarichef, Ishmin’s secretary, interfered in Ishmin’s behalf, and turning on him in a fury, Newhall was heard to threaten to throw him out of the boat into the river.

Ishmin himself was the sole observer of the tragic outcome of the quarrel, and torn between grief at the death of his secretary and loyalty to his friend Newhall, it was with the greatest difficulty that his testimony was drawn from him at the inquiry. Later this same night Ishmin was aroused by angry voices, and he left his stateroom to find his secretary, Paul Sarichef, and Newhall struggling on the deck; and before he could interfere, Newhall had hurled the unfortunate Russian into the water. Ishmin immediately dived to rescue him, but he saw the man go down for the third time before he could reach his side. Almost crazed with grief Ishmin spent most of the night in the river trying to rescue his friend's body, but though once he saw it drifting, he lost it in the darkness and it was never recovered.

Not even the officers of the law, though making every effort to apprehend Newhall, believed that it was a wilful, premeditated murder. Newhall was deeply under the influence of liquor at the time, and it is believed that he committed the crime in a burst of drunken rage. According to Mrs. Newhall's testimony Newhall had wakened from a drunken stupor the next morning with no memory whatever of either threatening Sarichef on the deck or of throwing him overboard. He fled to Western Alaska—far out on the Peninsula toward Siberia—and the above telegraphic dispatch completes the tragic story.

She read the piece through, then washed her tear-reddened eyes and waited for the sound of Ivan's long, low roadster on the drive. She resolved at once to keep a brave front in his presence, mostly because of a great good-sportsmanship that Peter had found and loved in her long ago, and partly, perhaps, for purely feminine reasons that were—by a long stretch of the imagination—almost disloyalty to Peter's memory. She had always cared to appear at her best in Ivan's presence. She secretly wondered if this were not, after all, an indication that what he had begged for was his at last,—her heart.

Had her love gone out to him in these past, bleak, miserable months of mourning? It is true that he had always attracted her

with his striking good looks that almost constituted beauty, the charm of his manner, most of all his wonderful music. He had always suggested a splendid tiger to her, lithe, graceful, quivering with restrained power, marvelously subtle and deft. His ardent attentions to her—while other women tried in vain to lionize and run after him—had been immensely flattering to her. But both of these things had been true even before Peter's disgrace, and she did not confuse them with heart's desire. However, in the last few months she had found herself regarding him in a different light. He had been her almost constant companion, her consolation, a tower of strength to lean on. The great sea of tenderness that in her first months of marriage had been Peter's had not flowed out to him yet; but there was, indeed, absolute respect, the deepest admiration, a sense of need, perhaps even—in certain mysterious hours—a feeling of deep fear. He fascinated her, this master violinist from the East. And there was no barrier between them now. The divorce Ivan had urged upon her would not now be necessary; the news from far Alaska had made her free.

In a moment Ivan himself was standing at her side, his countenance clouded in sympathy for her. She was ever amazed at this man. He was tall and looked slender; but she knew the iron in those long, easily flowing muscles. Once he had lifted her down from her horse—long and long ago—and she remembered yet the hardness of steel that had reached her through the caressing gentleness of that embrace. Their lips had met that day—illicitly—but he had begged her pardon with a gallantry that even her gallant husband could not have equalled; and had been the model of discretion thereafter. There was a darkness, a foreign look in his handsome face that fascinated her even as it estranged her, something Oriental and mysterious that she could not exactly trace or analyze. Ishmin was of noble blood, but it was the blood of a race oceans and centuries apart from hers in ideas, in philosophy, in attitude toward life.

He had come out of Russia at the beginning of the revolution, and was hailed at once as a new master of the violin. Before that time he was widely known in the theater of Petrograd and the Russian court, but he had not cared to seek laurels abroad. He had told her of his vivid, romantic youth in a great, weird, ancestral castle lost in the wild fastnesses of the Siberian side of the Ural

Mountains. She never thought of him as a Slav; indeed, he was almost pure Mongol, and the Oriental strain revealed itself in his high cheek bones, his black, glossy hair, most of all in the almost imperceptible slant of his glittering, musician's eyes. His hand itself was a miracle to her,—slender, long-fingered, throbbing with his musician's passion, ineffably deft and agile.

"My dear girl!" he told her, his thin face lighting. He took her hand, bowed, and touched it to his lips. Then they took seats, side by side, on the big divan. His voice streamed on, comforting, cheering not only with his carefully chosen though swift-flowing words, but by the exquisite modulation of its tones.

"I suppose you'll never forgive me," he said at last, in a more quiet hour.

"I don't see how I owe you anything but gratitude——"

"You know what I mean. You remember—that morning—after the trouble. You remember that when Peter wakened from his drunken sleep and could not remember the fight on the deck at all, he wanted to stay and fight the thing through the courts? It was I, you remember—of course with your help—who induced him to flee. And his flight has ended—by that." He pointed to the telegram.

"I don't see how it can be held against you, in the least degree," Dorothy assured him earnestly. "You were kind—generous—wonderful all the way through." Her voice dropped a tone. "Besides, this is no worse—better, in fact—that he should die doing a decent thing—going to the help of a sinking ship—than to die—in the prison on Elbert Street!"

"There would have been some way out! Life imprisonment, at the worst——"

"Life imprisonment! No, Ivan—not for Peter. Liberty was always a passion with him—with all his race, for that matter—and he'd rather be dead than in prison. I've got that consolation at least."

"How amazed I am that this should come from the North when we both supposed he was in South America."

She looked at him quickly. There was no doubt about the genuineness of this amazement. It was of no great importance—plainly the outcome of some minor incident of his flight—that Peter

should have fled north instead of south as planned; yet she got the idea that Ivan was profoundly stirred and shaken. He saw her look of surprise and turned quickly in explanation. “He took such a chance, Dorothy! I had a perfect course laid out for him—one that no one could have followed—but up there, in American territory, he was in hourly risk of arrest! It frightens me to think of the risk he ran——”

“But there is no risk now!” she told him grimly. “He’s past all that——”

“Yes. Perhaps it’s for the best. Try not to mourn too much, little girl. He would have been a marked man, a fugitive from justice, all his life. This way he died honorably. Perhaps it was for the best.”

To turn the current of her thought he took his violin—a marvelous thing of shell-like mahogany—from its case, and standing beside the window, he began to play. He had always told her that brilliant, adoring throngs could not draw the music out of him that she could; and she believed him. He chose the simple but eternally beautiful Schubert’s Serenade, and at the first round, perfect, moving note, her heart leaped into her throat.

He was wooing her with his music. The marvelous succession of sounds was an actual appeal to her. She stole a look at his face: it was white with exultation; his chin embraced the instrument, his hand caressed it.

He was telling her of his love,—a love that would go through fire or water, triumph or disgrace. She need never doubt its reality, its genuineness. She felt, that moment, he would renounce his high place and go to the end of the world for her, that there was no sacrifice he would not make to win her, no lengths to which he would not go. It was a love that glorified her, but yet it some way appalled her too.

It was not the kind of love that Peter had given her,—tender, almost fatherly, a tolerant, protective love and yet strong with that eternal strength of the Anglo-Saxon. Peter had been bitterly jealous at last, but it had taken many little indiscretions—harmless, truly, but yet doubtless intolerable from his point of view—to make him so. She would not dare play thus with Ivan! His jealousy would be like a firebrand, his hate like a dagger blade. Peter could not have

hated any one if he had tried. Hate was not in him; the madness that dwells in the cups, not hatred, had impelled the reckless, tragic deed on the motor boat more than a year before. It was true that he had now and then given way to violent anger, wild and ungoverned as the storms that sweep down the North Sea and wash his ancestral home; but he could not cherish a grudge or bear malice, and his tolerance, his finely developed sense of right and wrong, most of all his eternal fairness toward his foes, would keep him from any deliberate crime. It was not thus with Ivan. His crimes would never be the reckless ones of anger: they would be deliberate, carefully covered, remorseless.

The Anglo-Saxon does not live for women alone; he is too busy with his wars. He does not even prefer to do his drinking with women; rather he prefers other men, comrades in arms. When there are no wars he gives the fighting side of himself to his business, perhaps to sport or adventure. To his wife he gives comradeship, the tenderness that is all that he knows of love and unceasing, vigilant protection; but she is merely the dearest part of his life rather than his life itself, the shelter and warmth that he comes to after his day of toil or battle. The love that Ivan told her of in his soaring music was not like this. It was hot, deadly, passionate rather than tender; and Christian fellowship between man and woman had no part in it. Peter would not have ruined himself financially, perhaps he would not have even broken old and dear friendships with other men in order to hold her love. In the hour of need he would have gone to the sea's depths for her, but he would have taken the stand that if he could not hold her love without needless sacrifice it was not worth holding. This man who played Schubert's Serenade was of another race and another mind. He demanded her with a passion that brooked no interference.

He was bewildering her now with the incredible music,—playing of a white moon that poured down into summer gardens, of dream castles far away, of exotic fragrances. He was pleading with her now; and she could not remember that Peter had ever pleaded, except for forgiveness after some blundering wrong. His desire for her was articulate in every note.

Yet she did not make full response in her heart. In a way Ivan defeated his own ends. The very beauty of his music recalled to Dorothy a tenderness that was gone, a grace and a happiness that

she had found in Peter's arms in those first glorious months of their marriage. There was no fierceness then, no white heat, but there were holy hours breathless with a sweet, unearthly happiness. There was comradeship such as she could never, though she loved him to the world's end, feel for this fiery artist of another race; there was a mutual joy in the adventure of living, and there was laughter, not to be heard again.

It was for the best that Peter was dead, Ivan had said. Yet the words stuck in her throat when she tried to repeat them.

CHAPTER III

WHEN PETER NEWHALL was hurled into that awful sea he had no shadow of a dream but that this was his last conscious instant. There was no battling those mountainous waves, and the jagged edges of the cruel rocks would destroy him in a moment. Yet, as always in the last degree of crisis, the instant was one of marvelous clarity of thought.

Not merely the physical body strengthens and gathers reserve power in a crisis. The mental powers are likewise enhanced, encompassing a whole world in one glance, the breadth of many years in an instant. “It’s the end,” Peter told himself in one flash of blinding light. He did not even deign to hope but that those black waters would smother his existence; that in an instant it would be as if he had never been, his fear of the law instantly removed, his freedom gained, his crime of the year before wiped from the slate. He knew no particular regrets so far as he himself was concerned. In that instant of far vision he felt it was for the best.

In that instant he thought of Dorothy. Her image was just as plain, just as vivid in that eerie gray dawn as if he had just left her side. Her beauty swept him with its old, moving power; her merry eyes that were sometimes so dark and strange, her dusky skin with its dull, red glow, the long curves of her lithe form, and the remembered miracle of her kisses transfigured him now. There was no sequence to these thoughts. They came in one flash. The enchanted hours that he had spent with her passed in instantaneous review before him,—those hours before Ivan had ever appeared with his heavenly music, before the world had come to be too much with him and with her, the wife at his side. In that terrible instant his heart cried out to her as it had never done in the fullness of their happiness. She was his own, his wife, the woman that God had given him, and he wanted her beyond any reach of words or thought.

One smile from her would redeem him now and save him from the terror of these icy waters that had even now seized upon him and were battering him senseless against the crags. In this he was as a child; yet the terror was not so great that it could blind him to the fact that he was leaving her alone and unprotected in a world

whose trials had proven too much for him. There was an abiding quality of strength in him yet—for all these last months of debauchery—and his last impulse was in prayer for her. He wanted her destiny to be serene; his last breath of vivid consciousness before he felt the first, shattering impact of his body against the crags was given to her, wholly and without reservation. He wanted the world to be kind to the girl who had sheltered in his arms.

He did not pray for himself. He had not yet gathered wisdom to know that even these mountainous waves were not too mighty to be stilled by prayer. If he himself had dwelt in his own thoughts at all, it was only that when the time was ripe and his wanderings were done he could come back to her, if only in the night and on the wind.

The first blow against the crags almost knocked him unconscious; thereafter the struggle in that tempestuous sea was like a gray dream. Indeed, the grayness of dawn lay over the waters, dim against the dark, spray-wet crags; he was aware of its presence in some strange, vague under-consciousness that the horror of impending death could not ruffle or disturb. The waves caught him again, held him up, then like a wild beast hurled him head-first toward the jagged rocks.

Instinctively he threshed about in the water to save the killing impact on his head, but he was only partially able to break the force of the blow. The knife edge of the crag sliced down across his face, gouging and tearing as it went, and through the inner passages to his ears he heard his jawbone crack apart. Again the waves caught him, lifting him high, and again he was sped forward swift as a dolphin dashing through green water.

The force of this wave was too mighty to resist. His momentum was such, the pressure of the water so great behind him, that he was paralyzed and helpless in an instant. Half-conscious, he waited for the shattering blow that would mean the end.

But it did not come. The wave spent itself; then, as it rolled back, dropped him on gray, smooth rocks that were lifted above the water. In that dim instant he saw the gray line of the shore not a hundred feet beyond.

The waves had carried him, as if by miracle, through a gap in

the reefs. Instantly a fighting spirit welled back in him: if he could hold on, keep consciousness a moment more, he might easily be washed ashore. It was merely the primitive instinct to survive that commanded him now: the will to live and cool, human intelligence were both lost to him with the broader aspects of his consciousness. He was bleeding, horribly mutilated; yet he began to fight like a tiger in a trap.

The waves caught him again, lifted him up, and he fought hard against them to avoid the full power of the shattering blow when they laid him down. He was fifty feet nearer now, and as the wave went out, he struggled ahead to avoid being inundated by the next wave. And almost at once he was staggering on the shore, saved as if by miracle, in the icy, brightening dawn.

From that moment he had no doubt of his continued life. He knew perfectly that this was a wild, uninhabited land and that a few moments of exposure to the cold would end his life certainly as a hangman's noose; yet the miracle that had brought him through the reefs would not stop here. He had not been saved from the cruel fangs of the rocks to perish miserably from exposure on the shore; the destiny that had spared him would also find means to shelter him. His injuries were serious, but they would not be fatal if any help at all could be found, and without help he would perish anyway from the cold.

Still in his half-dream he shook the salt water from his eyes and looked about him. It did not surprise him that a ship should be lying just without the reefs, tugging at her strong, anchor chain, or that closer view should reveal a stout dory manned with a full crew that had evidently been launched in an attempt to rescue drowning men. At first no reasonable explanation for her presence occurred to him: it was simply part of the miracle that had borne him alive through the reefs. Yet in a moment he had guessed the truth: that this was a wandering trader who had answered the same appeal for help that had sped the *Jupiter* to her destruction.

The ship they had come to save was beyond the reach of help. She was a small, auxiliary schooner; the dawn showed part of her stern and her broken, floating masts where she had gone down. Of the *Jupiter* there was nothing whatever to be seen. The dory, in instant danger of being overwhelmed, rode just outside a wide gap

in the reefs and a quarter of a mile below, holding such a position that she would strike the sloping beach, rather than the rocks, in case she was blown into shore. There were no other survivors on the length of the beach that his eyes could span.

He did not believe his rescue could be accomplished for some moments at least, so he took the only possible course to keep the blood moving in his veins,—he got to his feet and struggled up and down the shore. The fact that the exercise caused a more active flow from his wounds could not be taken into consideration; it was better to risk death from loss of blood than to die swiftly and surely from freezing. But already the men in the dory had seen him and were trying to push into the little cove between the reefs. Still he ran back and forth, only half-conscious.

Blond, rugged men had gathered about him and were ministering to him when the last of his dim consciousness departed. He had no shadow of remembrance of being borne to the dory, rowed out to the ship, and hoisted aboard; but the strong, rugged engine of his life wakened him to sharp realization of a certain, ghastly business transpiring in the cabin. When he opened his eyes he was on a clean bunk, and a little group of men—none of whom he could ever remember seeing before—were working about him.

It took some little time to tell what they were doing. One of them, he guessed presently, was acting as ship's doctor: his hands were scrubbed till the skin was pink, he wore a white apron, and his look was very businesslike. He was talking quietly with two of the ship's officers as he sterilized a set of villainous-looking surgeon's tools.

Their conversation drifted faintly to Peter's ears. "Dis is quite a fe'der in your cap, Bill," one of the sailors was saying in the good-humored, subdued voice that is the peculiar characteristic of a certain great breed of seafarers. Peter did not have to glance at the blond head or the blue eyes of the speaker to know his race; his accent and his voice revealed it plainly. There is an old saying, at sea, that anywhere in the world a man may roam he can still find three familiar things: one of them is a sea gull and the second a Norwegian sailor, but the third one must go to sea to learn. The first two, at least, held good here: he guessed at once that three-fourths

of the crew, if not all, were Norwegians; and the ship was not yet so far out to sea but that the gulls cried plaintively in her wake.

"I know it's a pretty big job for my skill," Bill answered promptly. "If there was a real M. D. on the boat or within a thousand miles I wouldn't tackle it—though I've tackled some pretty stiff jobs, and got away with 'em, too, my years at sea. If I don't work on that face he'll be a monster to look at the rest of his life. I really think I can help him—I believe if he was conscious he'd tell me to go ahead."

Peter opened his eyes again, and one glance at the intelligent face, the strong, capable, well-scrubbed hands, restored his confidence. "I'm conscious," he said thickly. His jaw wobbled as he tried to enunciate. "Go ahead."

The sailors looked at him with no great amazement. "That's another complication—that you're conscious," Bill returned. "We haven't any anesthetic."

"Go ahead, anyway. My face hasn't any feeling in it, at all. It feels numb."

"I'm afraid it won't be numb when I get to work on it. But we're a thousand miles from a real surgeon, and you've got to have help. I'll be as easy as I can."

Bill went to work,—to the absolute limit of his skill. He stitched great, ugly cuts, he bandaged loose, torn strips of flesh, he tied bleeding veins, he fastened again—with some deftness—a torn eyelid that was the result of a long cut that passed diagonally across his face and which had broken the bone of the nose, and he tried his best to set the broken jaw. Through it all Peter clenched his hands, bit the wedge that Bill had placed between his jaws, and said nothing. He had learned, in the North, that there are many things of less wisdom than silence. This is one of the teachings of the waste places.

His torn nerves sustained him until the end, until the last wound was washed and repaired to the best of Bill's ability. Because he dropped immediately to sleep thereafter he did not hear the terse compliment that Bill paid him,—blunt words that would have pleased him more than any specious flattery in the days of his glory.

"The boy's got guts," Bill had said with emphasis.

Stabbing, burning pain in his jaws and face woke Peter late in the night; and he was somewhat surprised to find Bill sitting at his bed-side. “Don’t try to talk,” the latter cautioned quickly. “I don’t think you can if you tried, with that bandage around your jaw. You won’t do any talking for some weeks, my boy. But I can see you’re better.”

Peter managed to grin wanly and moved his hand as if in the act of writing. Bill understood promptly.

“I’ll get you a piece of paper in a minute. It’s lucky for you you know how to read and write. I’ve got to look at some of those bandages first, though.” He slipped off some of the stained white strips, sterilized the wounds, and put on fresh bandages. “Just doing fine, so far,” he gloated with professional pride. “Those fancy army surgeons couldn’t do prettier work than that on a messed-up human face. You won’t look like you, but you’ll look like something. You wanted a piece of paper? Wait a second.”

He laid the back of an envelope on the rail of the bunk and put a pencil in Peter’s hand. The latter wrote simply like the seafaring man he was coming to be.

“ ‘What ship and where bound?’ ” Bill read aloud. “Naturally, you would be interested in that. This is the auxiliary schooner *Dolly Bettis*, sailed from Naknek for Siberia. But don’t worry—we’ll be back to Unalaska in six months, and from there to ’Frisco. I hope you haven’t got any pressing engagements.”

Peter grinned in his bandages, and at the cost of some pain shook his head.

“Good. Don’t want to be put off if we meet any one?”

The castaway indicated “no” again.

“Then we’ll be shipmates for some time. The captain’ll be glad to sign you up; though you haven’t the hands of a seafaring man, there’s always something you can do. What do they call you?”

Peter took the paper again and started to write Peter Neville, the name he had gone under—the few times he had had occasion to give his name—during his residence in the native village. But he halted before he had completed the first word. A sudden, deeply moving thought flashed like a light in his mind.

He was hardly aware that Bill had picked up the paper. “Pete, eh,” he read. He had no idea but that the man had written all he had intended to write, and was not in the least surprised. Many men, in this remote end of the North, go by first names only; and it is not considered the best manners to inquire too closely as to what the family name might be. They were man to man, and Bill had no desire to embarrass his friend. He seemed perfectly matter-of-fact and grinned in a friendly way. “Limejuice Pete!”

Limejuice Pete! Bill went out and left this Southern aristocrat to ponder on the interesting situation in which he found himself.

CHAPTER IV

LIMEJUICE PETE! IT did not surprise Peter Newhall that Bill should take him for an Englishman. He was a pure Anglo-Saxon to start with, his features had suggested those of the better class of Britishers, but mostly Bill got the idea from his Southern accent,—an accent with which the crew of the *Dolly Bettis* was entirely unfamiliar but which, because it was nothing else they knew, became English by the process of elimination. And it did sound something like it—changed as it had been by his broken jaw—the softening of the R's and the drawling of the vowels. Limejuice Pete he was henceforth. Fortunately he had once taken a walking, ale-drinking tour through the British Isles, and he knew enough of the country to stand by his guns.

He wondered if he could leave Peter Newhall, the murderer of Paul Sarichef, behind him for good and all. The thought transfigured him. Could it be that, in this new guise, he could shake off his past, even his old individuality, and get a new start in the world of men?

He scrutinized his situation with the greatest care; and he soon arrived at a most interesting conclusion. There was no doubt but that he had vanished from his known world, not only the Peter Newhall whom he had been in Augusta, but the Pete Neville by which the natives had known him in the lost village of the Peninsula. The squaws would not see him again go reeling down the path between the huts. No one who knew him had seen his miraculous rescue from the beach. Except for one thing, one fatal obstacle, he might be free from the pursuing hand of the law for ever after.

It was true that he was the single survivor of the wreck of the *Jupiter*. But it was also tragically true that no one in the world of men behind him knew that he was aboard the *Jupiter* in the first place.

If one single native had seen him board the cannery boat, the world would soon believe that Peter Neville was dead. In his shack they would find proof of his real identity, and word would go out that Peter Neville, drowned in the wreck of the *Jupiter* was in

reality Peter Newhall, and thus the law would never seek him further. The fact that his body would not be recovered would scarcely be a factor in that case: the sea but rarely gives up its dead. As it was, no living man that could give testimony knew that he had been on the *Jupiter*, and it was not likely that his disappearance would be connected up with her wreck. At least, there would always be an uncertainty—and the unhappy consequences of that uncertainty were that the law would always watch for him—half-heartedly, perhaps, but yet intently enough to destroy his peace of mind—and that he was exiled to the little-known, uncivilized ends of the world until his death.

Only the crew of the *Dolly Bettis* knew that there was a survivor from the disaster of the reefs. In order that the whole world should be made to believe that Peter Newhall, alias Peter Neville, had gone down on the *Jupiter* he must tell his shipmates that he, Limejuice Pete, had been aboard and was a survivor of the auxiliary schooner that had sunk among the reefs, the ship that the unfortunate *Jupiter* had gone forth to save. No one living, so far as he knew, could contradict his story. Thus the world would believe that every one aboard the *Jupiter* was lost, Peter Newhall of course among them.

While it was not secure, at least his situation was more favorable than ever before. He had disappeared, and none of his Alaskan acquaintances knew whence he had gone. If they thought him dead —which was at least possible—he would have a better chance to live his life safe from the hand of the law and its ever-watchful servants.

The fact gave him new heart. He was free from immediate danger of capture, and the haunting fear of arrest—the rending shock to his nervous system at every new face in the village and at every utterance of his name, and the shadow of the gallows across his path day and night—could be forgotten. He resolved to get up as soon as possible, take his place in the crew of the ship, and get what companionship he could from his shipmates. He would not pay for his passage; in the first place it might arouse suspicion of him—men of the class he was supposed to be do not pay for steamboat tickets when they can work their way—and in the second, the hard work on the deck might fill up the long days and give him some shadow of happiness. He would not take to the whisky bottle again at once. That wild, half-mad dream was ended.

His resolution to make the best of a bad situation was strengthened the first day he was allowed to come out upon the deck. It was not that he could begin pulling ropes at once. His strength was no more than that of a child; his diet of liquid and half-liquid food—strong broth, olive oil, raw eggs and canned milk—had taken him down, stripping away his spare flesh and paling his flushed cheeks. But soon he could begin to chew hardtack again. His jawbone was setting: indeed, all his wounds were healing without the least indication of dangerous complications. He was already able to talk through the lips that before had been so torn and lacerated.

He gazed down into the dark-green depths and watched the incredibly graceful flight of the petrels that followed the ship. They had an old appeal to his race,—these wastes of troubled waters. They moved and stirred the best part of him. They might strip him down, try him, sometimes torture him, but in the end the good metal would be left and the slag discarded.

Ten days thereafter he was well enough to begin his first light tasks aboard ship; and the captain signed him up. This proceeding was not without an element of humor: the Southern gentleman signed the name “Pete Limejuicer” with a flourish. The captain grinned widely, then assigned him a shift on the paint detail that is always busy on shipboard.

He soon found that cruelty and slave-driving did not exist aboard the *Dolly Bettis*, nor was it common on any modern ship commanded by white men. No mates kicked him as he went to his watch, no belaying pins smashed him to the earth, and the captain’s tone, though brusque, was ever so much more decent and polite than that of many newly made lieutenants in the army training camps. Indeed, the old man—as the sailors called him—expected nothing of him that was beyond reason. As the days passed he broke him in slowly to the harder tasks; but he was never taxed beyond his rapidly growing strength, and he took into consideration the fact that Pete’s long weeks of obvious dissipation had made serious inroads in his constitution.

His wounds healed, his jaw and the bone of his nose were sound again, and now the blond hair had begun to lengthen and mat about his lips and jowls. Because it was gradual, he did not at first

realize the tremendous, incredible change in his appearance since the night of the wreck. In the first place health and decent habits had mostly eradicated the revolting signs of dissipation. His eyes were clear, no longer bloodshot and thin; the flesh of his face was firm rather than swollen and soft; he was a deep, good brown instead of pasty white, and the network of red lines at his cheek bones was no longer manifest. But this was only the beginning. His burly form had stripped down until he weighed but one hundred and sixty pounds, and now he had started to gain slowly as his muscles hardened to iron. This change alone was stupendous: he no longer gave the impression of being heavily built. Rather he looked lean, loosely hung, instead of rigid and stolid; his head and neck and back were wholly changed. And, as the months passed, there came to be other, less pronounced changes which, because they were subtle, would have gone farther to conceal his identity than any mere loss or gain in flesh,—particularly those of his carriage. His muscles were loose and he moved like a cat, with pronounced grace, and besides, he soon acquired that queer, rolling gait of a sailor that would remain with him until death. His hands—always a certain means of identification—broadened and strengthened and grew from the constant pulling and tugging at ropes; before they had half completed the cruise, they had begun to look like real seamen's hands, calloused, blunt, weather-beaten and skin-cracked, and certainly as powerful as vises of iron.

But these changes were all minor ones compared to the complete transformation of his face. Bill's surgical work had been a huge success as far as repairing his disfiguration, but in so doing he had completely concealed the man's identity. He was as changed as if he wore a mask.

Before he had had a rather full, extremely youthful face. Now it was lean, the cheek bones showed, the chin was prominent, the eyes looked larger, more luminous and clear, and much more sober. New lines had come in his brow, his nose was irregular, no longer finely chiseled; his mouth no longer looked small and rather pursed but large and humorous. He was no longer handsome, not from any pronounced disfiguration, but simply because of the new set of his features and, perhaps, the presence of a few telltale scars. His hair had only been faintly touched with gray before the disaster; the last months of distress and dissipation had shot it full of silver. Finally

his voice was completely changed in tone since the fracture of his jaw; it was still rich and full, and the differences were such as could not be narrated in words, yet the ear would never recognize it as Peter Newhall's voice. Besides, he spoke more slowly than was his former custom—he was given to long silences, to careful, deliberate choice of words. There was nothing left—so far as externals went—of the man he had been.

Before that long cruise was done, he found a certain simple pleasure in the sailor's life, in holding his place as a man among men. The hardest tasks on the boat did not appall him now. His hands were like iron, his muscles untiring. He liked the regular hours, the plain, abundant food, the hours of easy speech with his shipmates on watch. He did not, however, intend to follow the seafarer's life, for the simple reason that he knew it would sooner or later carry him into danger. When he returned to Alaska he would get some kind of an outdoor job at one of the canneries where he would be mostly out of touch with civilization and the law. When too much loneliness drove his fellows to the cities below he would patiently wait for their return.

The life crowned by Dorothy he had lived in the South must be resolutely shut from his mind: that was the greatest price he paid for his drink-mad crime of two years before. Yet the wind never blew from the south but that he thought of her, and sleep never came to him—no matter how hard his day of toil—but that the empty space beside him filled him with poignant longing. Her beauty was like a glorious dream to him now, remembered in all its fullness, but beyond belief that it was once his. The loveliness, the beauty, the ineffable tenderness of those early months of their marriage redeemed and glorified him yet, lost as he was in these wastes of foam-crested waters, under this empty sky.

The boat touched at Unalaska on the return trip, but because the ends of the earth fore-gathered here—because it was the meeting place for the wayfarers that came and passed through this empty, far-off edge of the East—he wisely decided to stay on board. But he would not continue on down to San Francisco, and thus into the toils of the law. The captain had agreed to put him off at one of the native villages, farther down the Peninsula.

Two days' sail from Unalaska a broken part forced the *Dolly*

Bettis into a little settlement in the Shumagin Islands; and when the ship had fastened to the dock for repairs Pete found, to his consternation, that he was in Squaw Harbor, instantly remembered as the home port of the *Jupiter*. For the moment he was shaken with fear. Although his old stamping ground was on the other side of the Peninsula, the fame of the Remittance Man had carried down this far; and likely there were men here who would recognize him as Peter Neville. His disappearance would be common knowledge throughout this part of Alaska; every one here would be on the lookout for him. His first instinct was to duck below and remain in hiding.

But already that chance was gone. As he turned, he ran squarely upon two men who had just encircled the pilot house; one of them was his captain, and the other Aleck Bradford, the superintendent of the cannery, and the last man on earth whom he wanted to see now. It just happened that he had got rather well acquainted with Bradford soon after his flight north: they had met in Unga; they had education and breeding in common, and Bradford had once offered him the hospitality of the little bachelor lodge he had built at the edge of the sea. It seemed inconceivable that the latter should pass him without recognition. Peter's heart leaped as the man walked by without a glance.

But he was not safe yet. The captain was immediately behind Bradford, and he stopped Pete with an outstretched hand.

There had been few more terrifying seconds in Pete's life. His entire nervous system was shaken to the core: he firmly believed, except for the training of nerve and muscle he had undergone in these past months at sea, he straightway would have fainted. The thought that flashed through his mind was of course that Bradford and the captain had already talked over his case, had established his identity from papers left in his cabin, and that he was under arrest.

He halted, breathless and deathly pale under his brown wind-tan and sunburn; and one glance at the captain's face told him that he had simply been the victim of a bad conscience. The officer's eyes were friendly: indeed he seemed less aloof, more companionable than ever before. "Come here, Aleck," he said easily to the man in front. Bradford turned with no look other than friendly interest.

“Meet Pete—Limejuice Pete to his friends. Pete, this is Mr. Bradford, of the cannery.” The manner of their introduction showed that there was a wide social gap between them—nothing that was not justified, however, by their ostensible positions in life—and Bradford’s smile and handclasp were cordial. “Pete, Mr. Bradford has the biggest run of Reds he ever had in his life in a new trap he was crafty enough to find, and he’s in need of some good labor. You were going to get off up here a ways anyhow—why don’t you ask for a job here with Mr. Bradford?”

Until this moment Peter had never realized how completely his appearance had been changed. Now, as Bradford gazed straight at him without even a hint of recognition, with no sign that this bearded sailor even recalled any one he had met, the fugitive’s self-confidence mounted like a flame. “I’d be mighty glad to work here,” he said quietly, “if Mr. Bradford can use me.”

“I can use you, all right. I’ll put you on the web-crew at the usual wages. I’ve never quite caught up with myself since I lost so many of my best men in the *Jupiter* disaster. By the way, Cap’n, you were standing by when that happened.”

“Yes. We’d gone to help the *Vigten*—same as your boat, I guess. Pete, here, was on the *Vigten*—the single survivor. If you want to know about that wreck, ask him. Of course, we put out a boat and cruised around until there was no hope of finding any one else alive—then went on without waiting for the dead to drift ashore. We picked up Pete more or less alive on the shore, and how he got through those reefs was a miracle. We saw, just dimly in the dawn, the *Jupiter* break up, but she was too far away for us to help. This is sure a ship’s graveyard—these hellish, Western Alaskan waters. How many men did you lose on the *Jupiter* when she went down?”

“All aboard, as you know—six of my men, a stranger from Nushagak whose body was never recovered—his name turned out to be Larson—and that chap that used to go as Peter Neville—we called him the Remittance Man, and he lived in a native village on the other side.”

The air was breathless. It seemed beyond belief to Pete that these men would not hear the wild, drumlike beat of his heart. He shuffled his feet uneasily. “Did you find most of the bodies?” he asked, when at last he could trust himself to speak.

“About half of both crews. The Remittance Man, by the way, turned out to be quite a fellow down South—as I had always guessed. His real name was Newhall—something like that—and he’d got in a drunken brawl and killed a man—was up here hiding. He was almost cut to pieces by the crags, and they identified him by some papers found in his coat. Of course then they searched his shack and got the whole story, piece at a time. The poor devil’s lying buried over on the Bering Sea side, just about where they found the body.”

Pete’s face was white, but he held himself with an iron grip. The truth was plain enough now. He had given his coat, that night, to the big Norseman—Big Chris Larson, the men had called him—and it was Larson’s body that lay buried on the mainland opposite; it was Larson’s name instead of his own that should be inscribed on the rude headstone. The cruel crags had mutilated his body beyond recognition, but the papers in his coat pocket had given the key.

He breathed deeply as he saw the full significance of this strange, ironic prank of fate. He no longer need fear arrest, the arm of the law. The word had gone out that Peter Newhall, murderer of Paul Sarichef, was dead, and that his body lay buried on a far-off, lonely beach. No one would look for him further. His photograph, posted in many police stations, had been torn down long since. Fear of recognition there was none: even his own wife, his own mother, were she alive, would never, never recognize him in his present guise. He could go his own way now, in safety. He could begin life anew.

He realized that even if he told these men before him that he was in reality Peter Newhall, they would never believe him; they would think him insane. Even if he wanted to prove his identity it would be no easy task; he likely could not convince even his own wife except by reference to certain priceless secrets that the two of them alone knew and possibly by showing her one or two boyhood scars on his rugged hands.

Peter Newhall was of the dead. The court’s charge against him had been abrogated by death. His crime against Sarichef was already beginning to be forgotten; it had become part of the dead past. For the instant he experienced a queer, creeping doubt of his own identity!

He could go to work here, unchallenged and unsuspected. It was as if he had died and grown up again: that with his new appearance he must also gain a new personality,—not that of the wealthy son of chivalry, Peter Newhall, but that of simple Pete, a plodder and a son of toil, a man of the North. He did not, however, deceive himself for an instant into thinking that he could find happiness. Even though the man who had been Peter Newhall was alive and well to-day, the love of living was as dead as the kelp that floated on the deep. Instead of bringing Dorothy nearer, this situation only raised an impassable barrier between them—no less than the dark chasm of death itself. Except as an outsider, gazing from without, he could never go back to his homeland.

His course would be simply to fill his days with labor and to speed the night hours with sleep. He would play the game, clear to the end. It was a strange destiny; but he had no other choice.

CHAPTER V

IN the months since she had heard the first news of her husband's death life had moved gracefully in Dorothy's home in the South. Ivan had tried hard to make her forget her loss, ignoring the clamoring public to be with her, heedful of her every wish, showering her with princely attentions. Meanwhile he wooed her with that incomparable finesse that is the peculiar gift of the Eastern peoples.

He never let her forget his suit, one moment in an hour. He played to her, he brought her gifts, priceless but always in perfect taste: curios out of the East, rare works of art from his own ancestral castle in the Urals. In her warmer moods he urged immediate marriage, and when she was cool and unresponsive he begged for her promise of future surrender to him, when time had healed the wound of Peter's loss. He told her that while it was true that only a year and a half had elapsed since his death, he had been absent nearly two years; and the tradition of two years' mourning need not hold with her.

Sometimes she encouraged him—letting him tell her of a long honeymoon in the Orient, of a wonderful world tour in which she could see the far countries as only he could show them to her, meeting the great of many lands and entering forbidden palaces by the "Open, Sesame" of his music; of a home in Paris where he had studied as a youth—but sometimes she seemed to draw within herself, infinitely beyond his reach. She did not go often into his arms, and this she was at a loss to explain, even to herself. It was not through loyalty to Peter that she refrained: Peter was dead and these caresses were certainly of the living world. Rather it was a vague fear of his fire. She could not overcome an abiding instinct to hold him rigidly at a distance until she was sure that the full sweep of her love had gone to him, and of this, even with the passing months, she was not sure.

One night in the second year he had brought her a marvelous blue diamond—a priceless thing with a sinister history—and he had wanted her to take it as a symbol of engagement; and that night she had been strangely, deeply afraid of him. She had let the stone gather fire to her hand, and when she had taken it off and put it in

his palm it was as if its cruel, hard, malevolently beautiful light had passed to his thin face. “Keep it a while, Ivan,” she told him. “Sometime I would be proud to wear it—but not yet——”

She had drawn back from him, appalled in spite of herself at what she could so dimly read in his striking, dark face. He was always like a splendid tiger to her; to-night he suggested the same jungle monarch cheated of its prey. Yet almost instantly the mood passed, lingering only in an aloof courtesy that her charm did not at once overcome.

She had gone into subdued mourning, but still saw a few friends and visited a few of the neighboring homes; and now, as another Georgia summer was at its height, he pleaded with her to go back to the gay colors that he loved. He seemed to feel that when her old gaiety returned to her, when she again took her place in the smart Southern society, his long courtship would be crowned with success. But he did not at once win this point; and because she did not fully understand it herself, she was scarcely able to explain to him the curious way she felt about it. “I can’t be the girl I was, Ivan,” she explained. “If that girl was the girl you loved, and you don’t want her changed, you’d better go away—and not come back. Some way, I don’t feel that I could begin exactly where I left off. I don’t feel and think exactly like I did—maybe I’m more like the girl that Peter originally married—like a schoolgirl instead of a woman. At least, I find that I look on things in a whole lot simpler, less complicated way than I did; many things that I thought I wanted I don’t want; many things that I used to think mattered do not matter at all. I feel bewildered—not knowing where to turn or how to go. I know I can’t wear mourning for ever——”

“Then put it off. It’s been a year and a half. Take up the old happy life again——”

“There’s the trouble. I don’t feel I can go back to exactly the kind of happiness that you mean: of course I’ll come round to it in time. Just don’t hurry me, Ivan. Something is working in me, and I don’t know what it is; but in the end I think it will be all right. You know there is no other man. But when I try to think of you, so many times I find myself thinking of Peter—lying on that storm-tossed seacoast. Just don’t hurry me, and I feel—I almost know—that everything will come out right for you in time.”

She had received, long since, her husband's few belongings, gathered by the patient effort of Captain Johansen; and she could not go near them now without tears. With them she had received a letter—one that no human eyes save her own had seen—and some way it had revealed their marriage relation in a new light. It had not only shown Peter from a different angle, but had also illumined her point of view in regard to herself.

Her thought had taken a new course since reading this letter. Up until then she had always thought upon her husband's disgrace and death as the consummation of his own deeds: heroic punishment, surely, but for which he could blame no one but himself. Now she began to wonder if some little jot of the blame could not be laid on her.

She had always been vain, somewhat spoiled by too much attention and flattery; and it might have been that somehow she had acquired wrong standards, that wrong standards were guiding her still. She was accustomed to flattery, and her vanity had come to demand it, to live by it, and to set too much store by it. Her devotion to society at the cost of even her own comfort was an expression of this same, inordinate vanity; she had associated with people with whom she had nothing in common, she had adopted habits that she personally did not like, and she had taken away from Peter to pay homage to it.

Ivan's attentions, after those first, blissful months of her marriage, had been flattery of the most engaging kind. To receive it, to waken other women's jealousy, she had given him more dances than were his right, had devoted too much of her time and attention to him. It had all been like a mad dream,—going from morning till night, sacrificing her home hours with Peter, laying all she had on the altar of vanity. She might have been able to restrain Peter's hard drinking if she had tried, if she had shown real interest. He never drank when he was alone with her—he did not even care for a cocktail before dinner—and at first he had not drunk dangerously to excess even with his men friends. This had only come after they had begun to fall away from each other, after Ivan—no one else—had come between.

She knew perfectly that there was no happiness in thinking upon these things. The sensible course for her was to follow Ivan's advice,

marry him, let him guide her steps down the shining path he promised, and play the gay game more desperately than ever. Really nothing else was left her now; yet she experienced a poignant sense of loss at what she might have had. In the end this would be her destiny; she sensed it as certain as the dawn of a new year. In all probability it was for the best; yet she could not quite escape a vague, haunting sense of remorse.

It was this that persuaded her to the amazing course that she unfolded to Ivan one night in late July, and which at first he refused to credit: nothing less than an expedition into Western Alaska with the purpose of finding her husband's lost and neglected grave and transferring his remains to the dignified resting place in the old City Cemetery, and the Newhall family vault.

Ivan's attitude was at first uncompromising opposition. "Dorothy, that's ridiculous," he told her. "I won't hear of it! A long, dangerous trip for nothing."

She turned to him in amazement, vaguely offended rather than pleased at this solicitude for her. The look of his face baffled her; the idea had evidently moved him much more profoundly than the occasion seemed to justify. He not only looked intent and determined, but almost desperate; there was a quick flash of a startled light in his eyes that she had never seen before. Yet, she thought, it was characteristic of this man's savage, enthralling love for her that could not bear her out of his sight for the months needed for the trip.

She was not pleased at his proprietary air, and she showed it. Her full lips closed and made a thin, red line; and the dull-red color deepened in the higher curve of her cheeks. "I'm afraid I'll be obliged not to consult you then, Ivan," she told him.

He saw instantly that nothing was to be gained by violent opposition. His brilliant smile broke like the sunlight. "Let's talk this matter over sensibly," he urged. "I can imagine how you feel—that you don't like to think of his poor remains lying out there on that lonely, rocky, desolate beach. But Dorothy, remember he left a note asking for immediate burial—it was not his wish to be sent home. He was buried decently—embalmed, the ship captain wired you. Besides, you don't realize the difficulty of the trip. I have a fair idea of far Western Alaska, while you probably, like most people,

think of the territory in terms of a nine-day tourist trip out of Seattle. I looked it up once, planning a big-game hunt. In the first place, to get there you'd have to go all the nine-day trip to Seward and then make connections with the mail boat, if there's one afloat now, all the way out to False Pass and back east along the northern side of the Peninsula—the roughest stretch of water known to man—or else take one of the salmon boats out of Bellingham, probably a ten-day trip, and then hire a launch at some one of the cannery stations—Squaw Harbor, or perhaps even around to Nushagak. Of course, the latter is the best way to go. It's not a trip that any one would care to take except by necessity—rough, dangerous seas, the most barren, rocky, treeless, bitter land you could imagine. If you feel you must have poor Peter's body here, with his father's, why don't you hire men and have them tend to it, and you stay safe at home?"

"Let me explain," the girl answered, her good humor at once returned. "I want to say in the beginning that I *do* feel I must have poor Peter buried here, beside his father and his father's father—those distinguished men that headed the line. Ivan, there is something primitive in me in this regard; I want my own near me, where I can look after him, and do what I can for his memory. I used to wonder why those heart-broken war mothers would open old wounds by having their martyr sons sent back from the battlefields of France—from the consecrated ground where they fell—but I don't wonder any more. It's a human instinct, Peter; and I hope it doesn't grate on your sensibilities. It's a real need in me, and I have to do it. Peter's crime against Sarichef was wiped out with his death: there is no reason why he should not lie with the other Newhalls, as is his right. I can't bear to think of him on that storm-swept beach you speak of, with no one to care for his grave, the cross that carries his proud name already rotting and falling to pieces—all alone, on that awful, barren shore. I can't stand to think of it any more. I can't make myself believe that it is only clay that the spirit itself no longer cares about; to me it's sacred. You ask why I don't have some one tend to it for me. Well, there are a good many reasons. The first is that it is my place and my right. In the second, I don't want desecrating hands at work at that grave—rough, wicked men who will say anything, do anything. At first I was willing to have it done that way, and three months or more ago I wrote to the postmaster at False Pass, and had him engage men

and boats to go and procure the casket. I've just learned that after great cost and many delays they have returned without finding the grave. They explained that they couldn't get hold of any of the ship's crew that had buried it, and they say that the country is simply immense."

"And they're right in that," Ivan observed.

"The work needs the presence and supervision of some one who is really interested," the girl went on. "I'm not sorry they didn't find it. Since I wrote the letter I've decided it was my place and my duty to see about this personally—to see that it's done right all the way through. It has been preying on my mind, Ivan. And if you ever want me to be yours, you had better assist me, rather than try to discourage me. As long as I have this feeling of duty unperformed—duty to Peter—I can't go to you. It's as if I am still bound to him—as long as he lies out there on that beach—but perhaps, when we come back again, everything can be as you want it to be."

Ivan was not in the least convinced; but realizing that he could not possibly dissuade the girl from her bold project, he prepared to make the best of it. "Well, in spite of a dozen reasons why I should stay here—concerts, business, everything—I'm going with you," he told her. "You've got to have some one to look after you."

"I'm going to ask Uncle Ned to go. Mother's health, as you know, won't let her take such a trip. But it would be wonderful if you would go too."

"Of course I'll go too. Your Uncle Ned is wrapped up in his business—he'll be glad to have my help in making arrangements for boats, hire of men, and so on. Wait a minute till I get an atlas. Perhaps we can figure our course."

Ivan procured a large map of Alaska, and they looked over it together. Later they consulted schedules and travel bureaus, and after endless investigation concluded that their best plan was to take one of the large Pacific American Fisheries steamers out of Bellingham, Washington; go to Squaw Harbor, in the Shumagin Islands, and there hire a launch and guides to go the rest of the way to the place of burial on the north side of the Peninsula. Squaw Harbor not only seemed among the nearest settlements of any importance—far though it was—but Ivan wisely decided that

because it had been the home port of the *Jupiter*, he could likely find men available who knew the approximate place of burial. He frowned on the plan to go to the north side of the Peninsula from which they would be obliged to work back to the burial place, explaining such a course would mean a loss of time and a less chance of finding and hiring a launch suitable to their needs.

Thus it was that Aleck Bradford, superintendent of the cannery at Squaw Harbor, received the following letter:

> DEAR SIR:
>
> Mrs. Peter Newhall, her uncle Ned Stanhope, and myself are planning an expedition onto the north coast of the Peninsula with the idea of exhuming the body of Peter Newhall, whom you will remember was a victim of the wreck of your launch the *Jupiter*, and bringing the remains back to the family vault in this city.
>
> Our plan is to take one of the Pacific American Fisheries boats to your cannery, and there, with your coöperation, we will hire a launch to transport us the rest of the way to the scene of the tragedy. If you can help us in procuring a launch and suitable crew, also in engaging men who might know the location of the grave, it will be deeply appreciated by Mrs. Newhall and myself.
>
> Yours very truly,
> IVAN ISHMIN.

Bradford called his assistant, De Long, and they thought upon the matter together. “The tough part of it is, by the time we can get a wire to them, they’ll have to rush to catch the last boat,” Bradford said, glancing at his calendar. “The *Catherine D* sails early in September—they can make it if they get a move on—but how are they going to get back? Of course the *Catherine* will be back for the winter in Bellingham before they can encircle the Peninsula, find the casket, and get back here in a launch. And I don’t fancy that Mrs. Newhall has had the proper raising to enjoy a winter in the Shumagins!”

De Long grinned cheerfully. “She probably hasn’t the least idea what kind of a hard-boiled land this is.” He knitted his heavy

brows. “It will be easy about getting out, though. You know we’re scheduled to send the *Warrior* down to Seward this fall, on that new trap business. You’ve scheduled her to leave about the end of the fish season. Well, we’ll have her wait for the *Catherine*, and these three people can get on her—the lady can occupy one of the officer’s rooms—Martin’s, I guess, and Martin will have to bunk in the hold. Then they can start out, and the *Warrior* can take time to run around the Peninsula, pick up the casket, and go on down to Seward. At Seward they can transfer to one of the Admiral Line boats for Seattle. In this way they’ll have the most comfortable launch in these parts—the only one of any decency—that’s fit to sail those Bering Sea waters; and besides, it won’t interfere with our getting out—down to God’s country—when the *Catherine* goes back on her last trip.”

“That’s easy enough: perfect, in fact. They can go down to Seward, you and I and the others down to Seattle on the *Catherine*, without having to delay the schedule waiting for them to return. The matter of getting suitable men for guides and camp help is not quite so easy, but I believe I’ve got that, also. Fortune Joe is a good native—he’ll be glad of the chance to make some money—and he’s a good worker.”

De Long grinned. “The medicine man, eh? They may need a medicine man before they get back. Yes, he’s a good one—for one. Of course he doesn’t know the location of the body.”

“No. For the other packer—they’ll need at least two, especially if they don’t find the grave for some days—they can have their choice of Buck Uman, Dago Sessa, or Nick Pavlof. Buck Uman is honest, but he’s the laziest native that walks. Sessa is given to violent spells when he’s apt to toss around his knife, and Pavlof thinks he’s a priest. I don’t know which two of the three are the worst.”

“Pavlof isn’t alone in thinking he’s a priest. All the other natives think so too—and you know, he has some sort of a dim, hereditary claim. It is a wonder to me yet, the echo of the power the Greek Church once swayed over these people. But not one of the three you mentioned, Aleck, knows where the body lies. We’ve got to get some one of Captain Johansen’s crew for their main guide.”

“And Captain Johansen and his crew have pulled out for Bellingham not to return until next season, and besides, the original

burial party is scattered to the four winds. Jacks, the apprentice undertaker, is in Siberia. But De Long, I've got it. Send one of the papooses down to the docks and tell Limejuice Pete to come up here."

One of the native boys carried the message as commanded, and the two men bent over their desks as they waited. In a few moments Pete's lean form stood in the doorway.

He took off his hat and held it in his toil-worn hands,—that great, blond, rugged man who had once been a gentleman in a far city. Bradford looked up with the instinctive respect that he had always felt for such a good workman as Limejuice Pete had proven himself to be.

It had been an auspicious day for the cannery when he had hired Pete on the deck of the *Dolly Bettis*. Although he was a silent, taciturn man to whom none of his fellow workmen had ever got close, he had learned the fish game in record time and had proved a valuable addition to the force. Bradford was glad to put him in the way of making some extra money.

"Pete, didn't you tell Mr. De Long here that you intended to winter on the mainland?"

"Yes, sir," the blond giant answered slowly. "I was going to take in some grub and a few traps and stick it out till the fish season begins, next spring."

"Well, you've got a queer idea of having a good time, to say the least. Six months of this sweet land is all I can stand at a stretch. Well, we've run into a good thing for you. How would you like to act as a guide for a party of people from the States—a job of two or three weeks, I should judge, in which you could fairly ask guides' wages—ten dollars a day. It would be late September and early October—giving you plenty of time to get out your lines before furs are prime."

Pete had long since lost all fear of recognition—of any one far or near—and he was immediately pleased at this show of confidence in him. "I'd like it mighty well," he assented.

"Well, you're the best man for the place. Some people are coming up on the last trip of the *Catherine*, and we're going to let them board the *Warrior*—and after they've finished with their

business on the Bering Sea side of the mainland, they'll go on in the *Warrior* down to Seward. You can pack on your winter's grub and your outfit, and they can leave you on the mainland when they go on down to Seward. As the single survivor of the *Vigten* you can show them approximately where they want to go."

Pete slowly straightened. His fingers went white to the tips. "What has the *Vigten* to do with it?" he asked brokenly.

"Nothing, except that the wreck of the *Vigten*—of course you know the last vestige of her has broken up and vanished—marks also the site of the wreck of the *Jupiter*. They are going out to exhume the body of that Remittance Man who went down with the *Jupiter* and was buried on the shore—Peter Newhall was his name. Mrs. Newhall and a couple of other people are in the party."

He thought it an illusion that the tall man in the doorway should seem suddenly pale and stricken, as if in the presence of a ghost. And it was true; the dead had risen for Limejuice Pete. The dead past had broken the locks of its sepulchre of the vanished years and had risen to haunt him again. He felt himself the victim of a strange and ironic destiny.

CHAPTER VI

EVEN as he wondered at the maze into which fate was leading him Pete was swept with exultation. Even though the few days in his wife's presence would only open old wounds, waken him again to the full poignancy of his loss, even though it would be but a ray of sunlight that would make the cast of his life all the darker by comparison, he was thrilled to the heart with thankfulness. His emotion was such that it was beyond his humbled powers to utter it. It was some way akin to certain emotions of childhood, too poignant ever to find expression in speech, never really to be understood by any one except a child.

It was not that his dreams overleaped themselves, that he was lifted up by false hopes. He knew exactly where he stood, his exact limitations. He knew, first of all, that Dorothy must never know his identity. She must never be permitted to receive the faintest hint of the truth: that the embalmed body in the casket was not that of her husband. Her eternal happiness depended upon that; and her happiness, hers alone—now that full vision had come to him—was the one theme of his life. He must never jeopardize it, waken a haunting, dreadful doubt by any word or deed. Except for the fact that his appearance, in face, body, hand and voice, had been so utterly changed, he would not dare take the risk of facing her.

He was down to essentials at last, this ghost of Peter Newhall. Cruel and hard had been his teacher, strait the gate and charged with punishment the scroll, but he had learned something of the very soul of life. He had learned that even unrewarded service is better than no service at all; that even lost love was better than an empty heart. He knew perfectly that his joy in the expedition to follow would be what he himself could derive from it, nothing that he might receive from Dorothy. The love that he poured out to her across the camp fire, on the far-off, lonely shore, must be absolutely unrequited. He would be a guide, nothing else. He could not enter into his old comradeship with her. He could never touch her hand except, perhaps, in some delectable accident as he worked about the camp or on the boat: no word of hers could be addressed to him except in command, no looks except the impersonal ones of a master for a servant. He knew too that Ivan would be with her, that

he would claim her and be her comrade. Yet it was all worth while. It was worth all the rest of his gray life on earth.

Could he not serve her, tend to her comfort, work for her, shelter her from danger? Would he not be her guide on that storm-tossed shore? Just to see her was enough: her warm coloring enhanced by the glow of the fire, her bobbed hair wind-tossed, the light in her eyes and the wonder of her smile. He would see her in the starlight on the long ride in the launch; he would know her beauty, her fragrance; he could lose himself in dreams that he could almost dream were true. It would be only for a few days—he could not follow her down to Seward—but their memory would glorify the remainder of his life, sustain him in the storm, shelter him in the night of despair.

Indeed, after that counterfeit of himself in the casket had been unearthed and Dorothy had sailed away, his own fate would not greatly matter. He would vanish into the interior with his traps and perhaps the bitter winter would destroy him; but at least he would have fulfilled his last dream—the only thing that he had ever dared to dream, since his flight from home three years before—and he would bear no ill will. The dark curtains of oblivion could drop over him for all he would care.

It moved him deeply that his wife should make the long, perilous journey in his memory, leaving the warmth, the light and gaiety that she loved simply to do honor to her dead. This was enough for him. He would not begrudge her the happiness she found later in Ivan's arms; her happiness was his law, and surely Ivan's decency and care for her deserved this incalculable reward. That the bones of Big Chris Larson should lie in his own family vault while his—when his time was over—would be blown dry by the winds on some rocky, desolate shore could not depress him either; although the infinite irony of the thing appealed to his grim sense of humor. Family vaults meant little to him now. When his time was over he was content to lie in the greater family vault of the world.

It was a great joke on Big Chris. He hoped that he would not be too uncomfortable in the proud, distinguished company of dead and gone Newhalls.

Meanwhile Dorothy made leisurely preparations for the journey. It did not occur to her that there might be need of haste, that the Northern winter was not far off and would soon spread his snowy banners on the stormy coasts of Bering Sea. She bought sturdy outing clothes, a heavy sleeping robe in case the search for the grave kept her over night on the mainland, and only the journey's grim objective prevented a certain spirit of adventure. Bradford's telegram, however, urged haste; and as soon as reservations could be procured, she, Ivan, and her uncle, a gray, kindly, successful business man of Savannah, departed on the west-bound train. At Bellingham the party boarded the *Catherine D*, the large freight and passenger steamer that was used in the fish trade.

She had expected some sort of a disreputable, old tramp steamer that was to be endured from necessity; and she was hardly prepared for the long, spick-and-span deck of the *Catherine D*. She soon found to her surprise that the journey promised even greater comfort than she had found in her apartment on the western flyer. Captain Knight let her occupy what he proudly called the bridal suite: a beautiful stateroom on the upper deck, equipped with bathroom, a great settee, and every possible device for her comfort.

She had always been a good sailor, and the ten-day cruise to Squaw Harbor possessed real pleasure for her. In the first place it was a complete rest for her tired nerves. She slept long in the morning, ate simple, well-cooked food at regular hours, walked the deck with Ivan or with the friendly ship captain, and spent the day at her ease on the long deck. She found that the vast expanse of waters wakened in her a sober, yet not unhappy mood. They made her rather thoughtful, dreamy; and in these days the memory of her husband was surprisingly clear and her own sense of remorse incomprehensibly accentuated. Sometimes Ivan found her preoccupied, and his dislike for this journey grew apace.

Sometimes Dorothy thought that he was struggling with something akin to actual fear. He seemed troubled, rather nervous; and it was not like this brave man to be appalled by the natural perils of the journey. Could it be that he was afraid of losing her: fearful that this voyage might waken and put in the ascendancy a certain side of her nature that he had always dimly recognized as antagonistic to him? Was he afraid that this serious, dreamy, thoughtful mood might shut him out of her heart?

Those ten days were wonderfully instructive to her as far as real human nature was concerned. She had been abroad several times, but always with people of her own immediate social class. On this journey she got to know the ship's officers, men who had the charm that only world-wide experience can give; she listened to sea tales when she was the captain's guest at a chocolate supper he nightly held in the dining saloon; she explored the hot, quivering engine room with the chief engineer, and she marvelled at that greatest mystery, messages carried to her from the void in the wireless room beside her cabin.

The morning of the eleventh day she wakened to find herself in Squaw Harbor, the first lap of the journey done. After breakfast, she went ashore with Ivan to make final plans for the launch trip to the north coast of the mainland.

She was immensely pleased with Bradford's arrangements. The *Warrior* would carry her straight to the scene of the wreck, he said; then the boat would lie at anchor outside until a dory could be put ashore and the casket unearthed and brought aboard. This accomplished, she and her party would be transported down to Seward, whence they could catch the *Admiral Watson* back to Seattle.

"I've got you three good men for your labor," he told her—with that kindness and courtesy toward strangers that is the tradition of the North. "Your head guide is Pete—he was wrecked on the *Vigten* and knows approximately where the *Jupiter* broke up. He's a hard worker and a conscientious man—I know you'll get the best of service out of him. Then you have Fortune Joe and Nick Pavlof for general labor—packers, we call them—both as good men as I could find."

"I'm sure they will be satisfactory," Dorothy commented. "And what odd names your Alaskans have."

"There are some queerer ones than that, if you just give me time to think of them. Fortune Joe is a native medicine man, and laugh if you like, the things he can do are not easily explained away. Of course, it is some kind of psychic power, but don't ask me what. Nick Pavlof, however, is an Indian of another skin.

"He'll interest you, Mrs. Newhall. He calls himself a priest, and

the truth is that he has some sort of a vague, hereditary claim on the office. You see at one time this was Russian territory, and the entire native population were members of the Greek Church. The Church itself has lost out since American occupation, but the old Indians, particularly, still retain a superstitious shadow of their old religion. This Pavlof is part Russian—he is the grandson, in fact, of a more or less discredited Russian priest, but the rest of his blood is native. However, the natives accept him, kotow to him: he officiates at funerals and has some sort of a vested right to marry people. Don't trust him too far, however. Pete will see that he behaves himself, but he's inclined to sulk, and I think he's a villain at heart.

"Pete will be with you until you have the casket safe on board; then he intends to leave the party, take his grub and his traps, and go into the interior for the winter. Wait an instant—I'll bring him in and introduce him."

Pete, waiting outside, had dreaded even as he had longed for this moment. It was hard for him to believe that their meeting, the crucial test of his disguise, was actually at hand. If she recognized him at all it would be at first glance; if he passed that, she would accept him for what he claimed to be and an absolute stranger to her, not looking for anything in him except the character of Limejuice Pete.

For the instant he hated himself that he had ever dared to risk her happiness by thus risking recognition. He had the wild impulse to fly, never to return to this part of Alaska again; but already that chance was lost. Bradford was guiding him through the door.

Though he had thought of little else for weeks he was not quite prepared for the first sight of the slender girl framed by the window and the sea. In their three years' separation he had gone through so much, he was so utterly changed from the man he had been that he had believed Dorothy would be changed too: that the changes he would find in her would put him at his ease in her presence, as if she were some other woman than his wife. Yet outwardly the tragic years had left her unscathed. Here she stood, the same woman he had left, the same witchery in her eyes and her smile. Indeed, she was nearer the heart's image he had held of her than when he had left home; in reality, she had reverted back, in some degree, to the girl she had been in their first months of marriage. Every nerve in

his body seemed to leap and thrill with the violence of his heart's welcome to her.

He could no longer remember that he was Limejuice Pete. He had come in awkwardly fumbling his hat; but now he stood staring, unable to speak, risking instant exposure by the white flame in his face. Yet there was no glimmer of recognition in Dorothy's manner. She smiled graciously, as always to the lowly, looked with keen interest into his bearded face, then stretched her hand.

Pete bowed awkwardly, then took the proffered hand; and its touch sent a violent electric shock throughout the intricate system of his nerves. By no gift of speech could he have told what that slight touch meant to him. He had always loved her hand—it had so reflected her dainty individuality—and the magic of its touch had not yet dimmed. It was only yesterday that its every caress was his. The touch of their palms bridged the years.

He held himself with a grip of iron. He must not let his thoughts carry him into madness. His only desire was to draw her nearer, nearer to him, to confess everything, to take her in his arms even at the tragic cost of her happiness, and thus the forsaking of his last theme. Only disaster lay that way. He must keep to his dream, hold true to his guiding faith.

He dropped her hand instantly, then turned to face Ivan. The latter bowed courteously enough, but did not extend his hand. It was through no desire to show superiority that he failed to observe this universal Northern custom—indeed, birth and breeding had made him sufficiently sure of his own place so that he was not obliged to have recourse to a cheap snob's tricks—it was simply not in his training to shake hands with menials, and of that class he assumed Pete to be.

And Dorothy, who had watched with deep interest, felt a dim, queer, inexplicable stir of resentment. It was something instinctive in her, and she was not sufficiently adept at introspection to analyze or trace it. Perhaps it was simply a desire to save the feelings of this big, shy, humble man before her; a belief that Ivan could have extended his hand in courtesy if only to save the man embarrassment. And all this was confused with a vague excitement that the moment had some way held for her, a spell and a magic for which there was no visible justification.

Her right hand fluttered and trembled, and the moment was like a dream.

CHAPTER VII

THE *Warrior* was loaded, not only with supplies for the journey but also with Pete's winter outfit, and the entire party put to sea. As Bradford had predicted, Dorothy was immediately interested in Nick Pavlof. He had a dark, unprepossessing face and a surly, unpleasant, guttural voice; she felt immediately glad that she had two strong men to control him. One glance at the big chief guide, his broad shoulders and homely weather-beaten face, told her he was not the kind to take over-much nonsense from quarter-breed Russians. Fortune Joe was likewise a dusky fellow, but he had a rapt, dreamy look in his dark eyes that identified him as a man living apart from the casual, material world of men.

In this struggling launch, creeping along the flanks of the cruel reefs, she felt nearer the eternal mystery of the sea than ever before. Perhaps it was mostly a matter of physical proximity; she had been somewhat detached from it on the long deck of the *Catherine D*, but here she could almost reach down and touch the water, and any one of the tireless, marching army of easy-rolling waves could seemingly reach up and overwhelm her. This eternity of gray waters, washing those strange, treeless, rock-bound shores, invoked an unfamiliar, plaintive mood in her. She was not only yearning, heart-hungry, but deeply sobered, humbled in spirit, wondering what was human life in comparison with the eternal constancies of sea and crag.

She hadn't gone about life in quite the right way, somehow. She had missed a great deal that might have been hers; she had passed over realities to live in empty dreams; she had renounced things worth while for baubles. The truth went home to her as she watched the waves breaking endlessly, forever and forever beyond the scope of her thought, against the gray, towering crags of the shore. But these vain, dim, half-understood regrets, this gnawing remorse, could never bring back the wasted days. Her wise part was to bury her dead, to lock the past in a vault of enduring stone; then to take up the old, care-free life where she had left it off. She would accept Ivan's fiery love and give her own in return. Surely such a destiny would afford all the happiness she had a right to expect.

This was an outcast land, and for the time being she felt in some

way an outcast too. She could not shut out its grim spirit nor repress the yearning, sober mood that it wakened. The land was beautiful, she knew, but in a weird, savage way. The low hills and tundra that at intervals sloped easily down to the sea were a wonderful beryl green,—a vista in two tones; one that of the rich moss of the tundra, the other the darker tone of the alder thickets. There was not a tree to be seen, far as her eyes could see. At intervals this rolling shore line gave way to grim and lofty precipices, the high ranges dropping sheerly off into the sea, and here the waves broke in great, upreaching, shimmering clouds of spray. Beyond these many-hued cliffs was the supreme Aleutian Range, a wonderful divide of sharp, jagged snow-swept peaks. There was no sign that man had gained a foothold here, never a village or roof, a trapper's hut or a camp fire. Thus had it lain unchanged since, in bygone ages, it had raised up from the sea.

She was aware as she stood at the deck railing that a few yards forward Pete the guide watched the shore line too. He also seemed lost in the brooding mood that it invoked. She found herself glancing, from time to time, at his homely, thoughtful face, the broad shoulders hunched over the railing; and by woman's secret ways she knew that he was deeply and poignantly aware of her presence, also. It was quite natural that he should be interested in her—likely, living in this desolate, forsaken land, she was a new type to him—but it was an unguessed mystery why his rugged, weather-beaten face, his lean, powerful frame should so intrigue her. Perhaps it was simply that he was a new type to her, too—a man of the open places probably unlettered and uncouth, but still the basic, primitive type from which her race had sprung. Suddenly he spoke to her and pointed toward the beach.

"Look just to the left of that big, white triangular rock," he told her. "Do you see something moving——"

Instantly she caught a spot of red. "Yes—what is it?"

"A fox. We'll see lots of 'em. If you keep your eyes open, we may see caribou too—they roam here in enormous herds."

She moved nearer to him, and he pointed out things of interest. Once he showed her a flock of beach geese, lifting tall heads from the shore; often hair-seal rolled up with the combers, and once he showed her what he thought to be that most rare of marine animals,

a sea otter, playing in a floating bed of kelp. Of sea life there was an abundance,—porpoise playing beside the ship, a whale blowing far off, once the long, dark fin of a basking-shark, chasing salmon in the mouth of a long, deeply-cut bay. “Maybe I’ll get to show you a Kodiak bear, too,” Pete told her. “Then you’ll get the thrill of your life.”

He showed her the high, glittering Pavlof volcano, and her towering sister peak, one of the most symmetrical mountains in the world. He seemed oddly eager, vaguely excited as he talked; yet never once did he evince the slightest sign of undue familiarity, and his attitude of deep respect never faltered for an instant.

She felt increasingly glad that Bradford had selected him for the head guide. She saw with pleasure that he was personally immaculate,—his blond beard trimmed until it was almost distinguished-looking, his rough garb well kept and clean. She had a feeling that, should one of the rolling waves rise up and overwhelm the boat, his would be a strong arm to rescue her. At present, however, the seas were comparatively placid, easily rolling, the sky blue overhead, the warm late September sun pouring genially down on the deck.

“I believe we’re going to have the best of weather,” she told him.

Pete hesitated. “I don’t quite like the way the clouds lie on the hills,” he told her soberly. “We’re bound to have good weather for a day or two, I should say—likely time in plenty to get where we’re going. Of course no one can tell in these uproarious waters. After a few days there’s going to be a change in weather, and what that means, no one knows.”

“Of course this is your best season.”

“Yes—September is one of our best months. But it’s like the calm before the storm. But we are getting too well along toward October, and October is too near our big, white winter to give us Western Alaskans any great pleasure.”

It was Pete who, later, brought fruit to her stateroom, opened a jammed window, and with the finest courtesy put himself at her service. And when the night came down, in silence and mystery, and the white, Northern stars emerged over the easy-rolling sea, it

gave her an odd, deep sense of security that this strong man of the North was waiting, somewhere just outside her stateroom, her guide and protector in case of disaster.

The *Warrior* rounded the Peninsula, then turned northeast along the south shore of Bering Sea. For the first three days the good weather prevailed without a break, but the morning of the fourth brought a sharper wind, a more restless movement of the whitecaps on the dark waves. There was also, for no apparent reason, a decided fall in temperature; and Dorothy felt glad of her heavy, otter coat that she wore on deck. The *Warrior* pushed steadily on, however, neither captain nor crew in the least worried by the change of weather.

The fifth morning found the sky overcast and lowering, and a decidedly keen edge to the wind. The water had darkened in hue, the tall cliffs frowned from the shore. But the *Warrior* progressed steadily, and at the dawn of the sixth day dropped her anchor out from the reefs where the *Jupiter* and the *Vigten* had gone down.

The landing party was soon ready to disembark. Dorothy, deeply moved by the belief that this was the site of her husband's death, her brunette beauty accentuated by the wind on her cheeks, and the sea's blue deepening her violet eyes; Ivan, thrilled by the savage beauty of the land, dressed warmly in smart riding trousers, rubber-and-leather boots, and a sheep-lined coat, and the three guides outwardly stolid and businesslike, climbed into one of the ship's boats into which Pete had already packed a large part of his winter supplies and such duffle as Dorothy and Ivan had brought; and the word was given to lower away. "One thing more," Dorothy directed, as the crew stood at the davits. "Ivan, I want you to bring your violin."

"Of course." One of the crew immediately brought the precious instrument to his side, not the brilliant Stradivarius, but a beautiful Hornstiener of wonderful, mellow tone. He understood the girl's wish. She wanted to hear him play amid these scenes of savage grandeur to which they had come, expressing through the magic of his music the weird, uncanny spirit of the rock-bound, eerie land.

The boat was lowered, and the three Alaskans took the oars. They headed straight toward the gate between the reefs where the dory of the *Dolly Bettis* had rowed to rescue the battered, bleeding

Remittance Man almost two years before.

The boat soon touched on shore, and while the natives were set to the work of unloading the dory and packing the equipment out of the reach of the tide, Pete led Ivan and Dorothy to the top of a near-by, grassy hill, from which they could overlook a long stretch of beach.

Nearer view did not in the least alleviate the deep feeling that this land invoked in Dorothy. As she pushed through the deep moss, up the wind-swept hill, the haunting spirit of the waste places went home to her as never before. How bitter, how drear they were,—the tall cliffs on which the waves broke forever, the long sweep of mossy tundra steeped in the silence of the ages, the bleak hills, and beyond, the glittering, rugged peaks of the Aleutian Range! Even the rich green was not warm and cheering like the summer hue of Georgian meadows. It recalled rather the strange, emerald tint of certain pools of poisoned water that travelers sometimes encounter on the desert,—seductive, malevolent, deadly. Yet she found no hate in her heart for this desolate wilderness other than its association with her husband's death. Really it moved some hidden sense of beauty in her. For all its bleakness, it was beautiful; for all its desolation it fascinated and intrigued her.

How sharp was the wind! It buffeted her on the hilltop. It shrilled over her head; and she saw, with growing alarm, that the waves were ever increasing in height and power.

She stole a glance into Ivan's face; and instantly forgot her own mood to wonder at his. Evidently the tone and spirit of these empty shores had touched him deeply too, and had stirred his artist's soul. She had a dim feeling that some alien, hidden side of this man, which she had always vaguely recognized and feared, was rising into dominance. Some part of him that was ever a stranger to her was making an amazing response. His eyes looked cloudy and dark; his handsome, impassive face was almost stark white. Yet he had not forgotten her in yielding to this poet's mood. She was still the center of his universe; and he saw this wilderness only as a background to her. If anything it enhanced her in his sight; and because the inmost, primitive part of him was being wakened he was all the more likely to give himself wholly to his desire for her.

She was vaguely troubled; why she did not know, and she could

not guess why she was somewhat reassured when she glanced into the face of the chief guide. Here was a sure foothold, like a great rock deeply buried in the sustaining earth. Some way he suggested a strong tower that the winds buffet in vain, that the snows lie heavy upon but cannot break down. He was of a Northern race—known and tried of old to such storm-swept lands as this—and naturally he could rise above their terror.

Pete paused on the hill, then began a detailed study of the beach below through the binoculars. And almost at once he saw the weather-beaten white cross that marked the grave.

He did not confide to Dorothy his real reaction to that discovery. His darkened, sobered blue eyes did not reveal that which would have amazed her considerably: a despair that shook this strong man to the foundations of his being. It had been his hope from the first that the cross had fallen and had been lost in the deep moss, and he would therefore have his wife's company for days and weeks while a detailed search was being made. But already the adventure was all but over. To walk beside her to the grave, to watch over her a few little hours while the casket was being unearthed, loaded on the dory, and put aboard the *Warrior*; and then they would go their separate ways. He could watch the *Warrior* that carried her and that grim counterfeit of himself until it vanished beyond the curve of the earth; and then only the waste places, the solitude of the crags hushed by the threat of winter would be left.

He knew there was no use to try to hide his find. Ivan would take the glass in a moment; and his keen eyes could not miss the sight of the white cross on the shore. It was a wonder that his employers had not distinguished it with the naked eye. The great dream of his life was already all but passed; and what was his fate henceforth he neither knew nor cared. Only the North would be left,—the wind streaming by in its never-ending journey, the tundra swept by winter's infinity of snow.

Dorothy, watching him, saw a queer look of strain steal into his homely countenance; and the glass trembled in his hand. But he spoke slowly, perfectly casually, when he turned.

"I've found it already," he said.

"The cross?" Ivan asked quickly.

“Yes. Not three hundred yards from the camp. We would have seen it from there if that big, gray boulder hadn’t been in the way.”

He was somewhat surprised that Dorothy should take the news so quietly. The fact that the immediate finding of the grave meant that they could at once sail on down to Seward and leave this howling wilderness did not seem to sink home; instead of being exultant she was only thoughtful and subdued. But of course Ivan could not expect a really happy mood, considering the tragic nature of this undertaking.

On the other hand Ivan himself seemed not only overjoyed, but somewhat relieved. Evidently this waste land held little pleasure for him and he was eager to turn away.

The three of them walked quietly down to the grave. The cross was a simple one of white board; yet the crew of the *Norwood* had done well by the man who slept below. They had printed simply:

PETER NEWHALL
November 24, 1920
R. I. P.

The dignity of the simple inscription brought a soft luster to Dorothy's eyes, but Pete stared down like a man in a dream. What a travesty it was! What a joke on Big Chris Larson lying inarticulate in the casket beneath.

Pete called the two camp helpers, and they came with their shovels. "You won't want to watch this, Mrs. Newhall," he said courteously. "Would you like to have me row you back to the boat?"

"I'll stay it out, Pete, thank you. I'm afraid it's going to rain, though——"

Pete's blue eyes studied the sky. In the emotional stress of the last few moments he had forgotten his old enemy, the Northern winter. The clouds had darkened and lowered: the cold, driving rain of the North Peninsula was certainly not far off. "I'm afraid so too," he commented. "If we work fast, maybe we can get back to the ship before it breaks."

He took one of the three tools and turned his own big muscles to the task. It soon became increasingly evident, however, that they could not beat the storm; and in all likelihood would be obliged to spend the night ashore, after all. A sudden, sharp increase in the wind had blown up waves of alarming size, and it was doubtful whether they should dare try to reach the ship in the open dory. At least the casket could not be transported aboard till calm weather; this much was certain. For once in his life Pete blessed the gods of the storm.

He turned with a radiant smile that seemed to light his homely face. "Don't worry, Mrs. Newhall," he assured the girl. "We'll take care of you and make you comfortable if it blows the mountains over."

She was strangely, deeply grateful, and her warm color deepened as she answered his smile. "I'm not afraid, Pete. I know you'll look after us."

And now the squall at sea was beginning to resemble a real hurricane. The first few drops of cold rain, like fine shot, began to lash down at them before a race-horse wind; and Pete immediately took measures for his employer's comfort. He took his two men from the work, and aiding them with his own broad shoulders, he tipped the dory halfway over on the beach. Then he spread Dorothy's heavy, canvas-lined sleeping robe beneath it. "Get under there," he invited cordially.

Dorothy and Ivan both were glad to obey, for all at once the clouds dissolved in drenching gusts of rain. The higher hills were at once obscured in mist; and the storm, dropping between, all but obscured the *Warrior* riding at anchor. And now, as the storm increased in violence, it became increasingly doubtful whether or not the craft could stand out in her present, exposed position.

They soon were answered as to this. As all of them watched, appalled, the dim ghost that was the ship began to fade into a shadow. At first Dorothy dared to believe that the mist had simply thickened between, but by peering steadily she soon knew the amazing truth. The *Warrior* was floating away into the haze—whether adrift or driven by her engines she did not know—leaving herself and her companions to the grim solitudes of the wild and the mercy of the storm.

CHAPTER VIII

DOROTHY could scarcely believe her eyes at first. Then she leaped out from her shelter—a slender, appealing figure in the clouds of rain—and called sobbingly, as if her voice would carry out to sea. Then she turned in desperation to the head guide.

"Launch the boat quick, Pete," she said. "Maybe we can catch her yet——"

He shook his head, soberly and respectfully. "You'd better get back under cover, Mrs. Newhall," he advised. "It would just mean to be lost if we tried to catch her. She probably had good reasons for going——"

"But to leave us here, in this awful place——"

"She probably didn't have any other choice. I think likely her anchor chain broke, and she had to use the power of her engines to keep from being blown upon the reefs. Her crew is heading her for some shelter where she can lie at anchor—possibly clear to Port Heiden. She'll lay up there till the storm is over, then come back for us. I'll make you comfortable; the best thing for you now is to keep dry till we can make camp."

"But how long before they'll be back?"

He looked straight into her wide-open, violet eyes. "That's a question, Mrs. Newhall. When these storms come up, no one knows when they are going to go away, but surely it won't be more than a few days, at most. It will be quite an adventure for you. Fortunately we've got plenty of grub—a good part of my winter supply that will last the five of us nearly a month, with fresh meat. I've got my rifle here, so we won't starve. Perhaps they will be back to-morrow."

"And you're sure we'll have to spend the night on this barren, stormy shore——"

"No help for it, Mrs. Newhall. And maybe a few other nights besides. But we are a thousand times safer than your uncle and the crew of the launch, at that."

She got the puzzling impression that his face looked somewhat white, as if with exultation. She did not know that this was like a

new lease of life to a condemned man,—these few extra days of happiness that were the gift of the storm. Work on the grave was immediately given over, and the three men turned to the establishment of a comfortable camp.

Pete himself was not an experienced camper, but he was a strong man, deft with his hands, and a few camping trips and deer-hunts in the last year had taught him the rudiments of woodcraft. In addition he had at his command the genuine woods skill of the two natives. He selected for their camp the first alder thicket adjacent to the boat, which happened to be on an easy slope, immediately above and less than fifty yards back from the grave on the beach. A small stream flowed past their camp and down to the sea, providing plenty of pure water; and the grass of its bank was deep and rich. A space was cleared in the center with the axe, and here, in a place of comparative shelter from the wind, he spread his own light, compact, waterproof tent. Here, on the soft moss under the canvas, he spread the girl's sleeping robe. "Duck for it quick," he told Dorothy, as he wrapped his own great slicker coat about her. "You'll be more comfortable than under the boat."

Ivan turned as if he would resent even this shadow of familiarity, but what he saw on the girl's face silenced him. Dorothy had evidently not taken offense. Presently, her hand in his, they were racing together across the tundra toward the shelter of Pete's tent.

One of the natives dug up the roots of a certain dwarf willow that grew beside the creek, and here he found dry kindling that soon developed a cheery fire. The alder sticks that comprised the fuel burned like coal, slowly, with an intense heat. Pete's own camp stove soon had the tent thoroughly warm and dry.

The situation looked a little better to Dorothy by now, but it was still a doleful project. The tent was for one person only; she could not image how the four men were to find shelter from the storm. This, however, did not prove difficult. Nick Pavlof was adept at building the combination dugout and turf house that is almost the only kind of human habitation known on the Bering Sea side of the Alaskan Peninsula, and he soon had a shelter that not only defied the rain, but also wind and cold. One phase of it amused Dorothy exceedingly: that proud Ivan would be obliged to sleep in the same

quarters, the same room, in fact, with the three guides.

Pete disappeared with his rifle up the hill; and soon Dorothy heard him shoot. He returned in a moment with a plump grouse, nearly as large as a chicken, that he explained was the incomparable ptarmigan of the barren lands. He was not a particularly fancy shot, but he had been able to approach within a few feet of the bird and snick off its head with his rifle bullet. Pavlof, who had been given the job of assistant cook, cleaned it and it was soon frying merrily on the camp stove.

The entire company was improved in spirits after a lunch of the tender, delicious flesh of ptarmigan, fried potatoes, and reflector biscuits served with marmalade. It was not, Dorothy considered, served in just the way to which she was accustomed; yet it certainly filled a very human need. Pete himself superintended her coffee, and he seemed to know by instinct just how she liked it! It was rich and dark and smooth: though of a land of coffee drinkers, she herself could not have made it better.

Camp work was completed in the afternoon while Ivan and Dorothy played cards to pass the time. Dorothy was already reconciled to a few days' delay on the mainland; but her companion could not conceal, beneath his courtesy and good-sportsmanship, an ardent desire to turn back toward home. They watched together the gray of twilight thicken over the land, followed soon by the swift-falling darkness. The three workmen moved dimly in and out of the firelight as they prepared the evening meal.

Pete himself filled the girl's plate and brought the food, steaming hot, to her side. She ate heartily, grateful to him, and his last work was to dig roots from beneath her sleeping robe so that she might spend the night in comparative comfort.

He paused for a single instant in the half-darkness beside her. "If the rain quits to-morrow, I'll cut a lot of tundra grass and make you a real bed," he told her quietly. His voice was almost tremulous in the dusk, and it some way carried her back to the manner in which Peter had spoken, in sacred moments of their first months of marriage. "Perhaps this won't be too bad to-night."

Ivan himself could not have been more considerate of her. She couldn't explain how, yet this man's understanding of the North, his

confidence in his own ability to cope with it and conquer it, passed to her and comforted her. “You don’t think we’ll have to spend another night here, do you?” she asked.

“I think it very likely. Is that all I can do for you, Mrs. Newhall?”

“Everything, Pete. You are very kind. Pete, what part of England are you from? Your accent is not greatly different from the men of my own country.”

He looked straight at her. “Liverpool. But I’ve been in America so long, in the North, it is queer my accent would be anything but Siwash.”

“One thing more. I want you to reassure me. Say that something happened that the *Warrior* did not come back—that she’d go to pieces in those awful waves. What would happen to us?”

“It would be serious, but not necessarily tragic—for us. If worst came to worst, you could take supplies and follow down the coast in the dory until you reached some sort of a settlement. But it would be a dangerous trip—subject to long delays on account of bad weather—and not to be attempted except in an emergency. You’d have to have ample supplies, too. But don’t worry—the *Warrior* is a staunch little boat.”

He bade her good night and soon vanished into the murk of the storm. She sat a while with Ivan, listening to the beat of the rain on the tent.

The hour had a quality of mystery,—the deep dark, unbroken except for the low, sullen glow of the fire; the long wail of the wind and the beat of the waves; and about them the unconquerable wild. A sea gull called desolately from the shore. Ivan lighted a cigarette, and the match flare showed his face curiously strained and intent. His hand trembled as he held the match.

“Dorothy,” he asked suddenly, “does this land take hold of you?”

She waited an instant, half-dreaming, before she attempted reply. “It gets my imagination, some way,” she confessed at last. “It has given me the queerest moods, the strangest thoughts—all day long. How does it affect you?”

He moved nearer, groping for her hand. He caught it at last, and his throbbed with the fierce pulse of his arteries. “Do you want to

know how it affects me? It just seems to peel me down—to strip off a veneer of civilization that I've picked up somewhere and just leave the basic part of me. That part of me is something that you yet don't fully know—and I'm some way afraid to have you fully know it." His voice was subdued, and he spoke with evident difficulty. "To-night I'm the man of the Ural Mountains. The Occident falls away—and leaves only Asia."

A dim fear trickled through her, a sense of estrangement and at the same time of deep fascination; and she struggled to regain her poise and self-confidence. "Yet this isn't Asia," she said.

"I don't know. It's so far west that it is almost east. It's like my own Siberia. Dorothy, did you notice Pavlof's attitude toward me?"

"No. Not particularly."

"It's like a slave for his master. I am not boasting, Dorothy. That man has enough echo of Asia in him to see Asia in me, and he bows before it. I can understand him perfectly, sense his moods, and if he didn't half worship me the same time that he fears me, I could imagine circumstances whereby I would have to fear his knife. But I haven't anything on earth in common with that big guide, Pete. You, on the other hand, seem to get along well with him. You instinctively like him."

"The East is East, and the West is West," she quoted thoughtfully.

"That's it. Your Pete is an Anglo-Saxon—the most dominant of all Western peoples. I am a Russian—strictly speaking, I am a Mongol, and Oriental blood has slanted my eyes. There's no use of trying to hide that fact from you, even if I were not proud of it. Pete and I could never understand each other; we'd fight and kill each other in a minute if the gallows and several other things didn't drop a shadow between."

"Yet—I am an Anglo-Saxon," she told him.

"Yes." He hesitated. "But also you are a woman. We men of the East do not look on women as we look on men. I don't love you for what you racially are. I love you because you are a woman, and beautiful. Racial differences don't have to interfere in a love like ours—in a marriage such as ours would be, that would move like a dream—in a garden."

“A marriage of the Orient!” she prompted.

“Yes, but who but the Orientals know what love is? A marriage of lips, of clinging arms, of beauty and loveliness. What could an Anglo-Saxon give you half so wonderful! And to-night, when I’m stripped down to myself, I want you with a want I never began to reach before. It’s almost incredible to me that I can’t have you—that I should let anything stand in the way! If I were true to my Eastern birthright I’d take you—to-night.”

Yet she felt that he would not take her—to-night! The fear that now swept her, vague and dim, was not of actual, imminent danger to her integrity; rather it was of a barrier of race that this wild, storm-tossed coast had revealed and made manifest between them. It was true that from his point of view this barrier of race could not and did not exist. It did not conflict with the kind of love he had for her, simply because such did not take human fellowship into consideration. Perhaps, after all, he did not really care whether she loved him, in the Western sense,—the love that is born of comradeship, that is strengthened by the years and by united struggle against the cruel rigors of the world. It was enough just that she gave herself to him.

He took his violin from its case and held it a while, lovingly, in his white hands. He began to play for her, softly.

The composition he chose was one that she had never heard before: a wild, haunting thing in the minor that she guessed was a folk melody of his own Urals. He was not playing to her, to-night. He was simply seeking expression of his own unfathomable, Oriental soul. As always his technique was flawless; yet to-night he played with a fire and an ardor she had never heard in him before. The music soared and wailed; paled away with a strange sense of exquisite discord that seemed to rip apart the nerves but which yet streamed through the whole fabric of being; rose to a fierce, incredible crescendo; broke sharply off into a lilt of cloying sweetness, then soared and wailed again. Pavlof, in the dugout, heard the melody, and his eyes glittered, and he loved Ivan as a dog loves his master. The Indian heard it, and was lost in dreams. And Peter, as that weird music poured through him, experienced a vague, slowly creeping fear for the woman he loved.

It was but a prank of the imagination, soon to pass away, but as

long as those sweet, wild notes worked their music in the night, no power of his could dispel it. He did not dream that Dorothy was likewise afraid. Yet to-night Ivan's soul was bared to her sight, and she could not forget that—except for three menials she had known for only a few days—she was wholly at his mercy. He had shaken off his conventionality as a moth shakes off its stale cocoon; and there was no visible refuge from him. The strength she had once relied on—in the casket now, or whispering in the wind above her head—could not come to her aid. It was only a fancy, born of the music, but like the guide who listened from the dugout, she could not shake it off.

Ivan played on and caught the soul of this North in the wild, plaintive tones. The music mingled with the sound of the storm, the rain lashing the tent, the long shriek of the wind, the beat of the waves on the shore.

CHAPTER IX

DOROTHY slept late, and Pete cooked her a special breakfast when he heard her stirring in the tent. She saw with relief that the worst of the storm had passed during the night. There was not so great an agitation of the clouds that streaked across the face of the heavens, the rain had ceased, and the wind, though still brisk, was no longer a gale. The waves, however, were still quite high, the aftermath of the gale.

When Pete took the crude, tin eating utensils from her hand, he paused, for a moment, uncertainly. "Mrs. Newhall, this camp is in need of fresh meat," he began rather shyly. "We may be here a few days yet, and a nice venison would go pretty good. I'm wondering if you and Mr. Ishmin would like to go into the interior with me, to-day, and see if we couldn't get a caribou. It would help to pass the time, and it might be interesting to you."

Dorothy glowed at the prospect. "I'd like it very much, Pete. Let's ask Ivan about it."

But the musician, sprawled on his moss-bed and reading a pocket-size novel in the original French, did not take so kindly to the suggestion.

"Not me to-day, Dorothy," he protested. "There'll be no pleasure for me in tramping over that howling tundra. The wind's still sharp enough so that I want a fire and appreciate even such a lowly shelter as this. Wait till a nice day and I'll go gladly."

The girl turned in some disappointment to Pete. "I guess that ends it," she told him.

The guide straightened, encouraged by her tone. "Yes—unless—unless you'd care to go with me alone." She thought she saw a very curious, urgent appeal in his blue eyes. "I wouldn't take you very far."

He waited, hardly breathing, for her answer. She turned questioningly to Ivan. The latter smiled dimly and nodded his head. "I don't see why you shouldn't, if you want to," he told her.

He spoke perfectly sincerely. It did not occur to him to be

jealous in the least of this lowly guide; his own pride, his confidence in Dorothy, would not let him entertain such a thought. Jealousy of such a man as this would have implied equality, and this his consciousness of his own noble blood would not let him admit, even to himself. At the same time he knew that this Anglo-Saxon was absolutely to be trusted. This was not merely a belief with him; it was a conviction, the result of instinctive understanding of the man and his race. Pete would have only respect for his employer, in the fastnesses of the hills. It would likely have been the same with Fortune Joe, the native; but he would never have thus put temptation in the way of Nick Pavlof.

Yet an uneasy thought darkened his face, and he turned sharply to Pete.

"How far do you intend to go?"

"Not any farther than Mrs. Newhall desires," was the answer, given with some spirit. "I'm inclined to think we can pick up a caribou within a mile."

"You'll be pretty lucky if you can. It's not that there isn't plenty of game—Bradford told me that—but the country is enormous. Don't go more than two miles at the most—we might want to leave here in a hurry, and don't want to wait for you. Go ahead, Dorothy, if you like. If you want to be a huntsman bold, I don't see why you shouldn't."

"Then would you mind lending Mrs. Newhall your pistol?" Pete asked. "She might want to take a shot at a ptarmigan, and this bear gun of mine wouldn't leave much bird."

He spoke quietly, casually, but Dorothy did not misunderstand. At the same instant she realized that this tall, rugged man of the opens possessed those certain good manners, that unobtrusive consideration for others, that is the ideal of good breeding. He made this request not to furnish Dorothy an arm with which to shoot ptarmigan. Both she and Ivan understood this in an instant. He wanted to save her any uneasiness when she was alone with him in the wilds, simply to give her a deadly weapon with which she could protect, in direst need, her own integrity. She was caused to recall her own homeland of which chivalry is the tradition.

In the character of Pete the guide, this man had not been wholly

able to discard the South's most treasured teaching. This was simply an instance of the natural chivalry that was, in the last analysis, the chief trait and the guiding light of the Georgian's life. He could not be otherwise. It was his birthright.

The two started away very happily together. Pete's blue eyes danced; the girl was flushed and eager, bent on adventure. He took her up the low hill they had climbed the previous day, then down into the alder-grown valley beyond.

Almost at once they began to see the wild life that redeems even such barren, desolate lands as this. Ptarmigan flushed up, and instantly Dorothy recognized them as the most graceful creatures she had ever seen on wings. They had a way of mounting high, then dropping straight down, light as thistledown, and their raucous cries filled the air.

"Would you like to try a crack at 'em?" Pete asked. "They'd go mighty well for lunch."

But Dorothy had no killing instinct, and she shook her head. "They're too pretty. Of course we'll get some if we can't find any big game."

He led her through a break in the alders; and here they both halted to watch a huge, snowshoe hare. It was a droll thing to see this creature stand erect in the grass in an effort to see plainly out of his weak eyes and to distinguish the nature of these tall, strange forms such as he had never laid eyes upon before. He walked back and forth on his hind legs, stretched to his full height. Then, remembering safety first—even at the expense of his inordinate curiosity—he sped away.

Once Pete startled and halted her by an abrupt touch on the arm. "Stand perfectly still," he cautioned. "You'll see the proof of something Fortune Joe told me—that an animal can't distinguish anything but a moving object. It's a fox—and by George, he's got something in his mouth."

Down through the valley and straight toward them came Reynard, spreading his beautiful brush and bearing a ptarmigan that had been the late prey of his stealthy and ferocious cunning. It was amazing to the girl that the animal—a large, splendid specimen of the Northern red fox—should approach steadily within fifty yards

before he so much as noticed them. They were in plain sight in the open, but because they stood motionless he simply did not see them.

He halted uneasily, turning his head to the right and left; then to get a better look, and partly from simple preoccupation, he dropped the grouse. It delighted the girl beyond words when he walked a few feet to one side in an attempt to size up their breed. Not quite satisfied, he started to trot away.

But he was not so frightened but that he returned to get his grouse. He ran a few feet, then turned to look again. He was a beautiful thing, burnished red; his step was indescribably delicate in the moss; and he made, his game in his mouth and vivid on the hillside, an entrancing picture. Having business elsewhere, he soon trotted away.

"It's perfectly amazing," the girl said, when she got her breath.

"Isn't it! He simply couldn't dope us out—and because we didn't move we didn't register fear in his foxy mind. You see, Mrs. Newhall, animals were developed without taking man into consideration, and that's why man is such a fatal enemy to them. They're not prepared to contest man's power of reason. To them, things that do not move are not alive—except, of course, when they can get a living scent. If the wind hadn't been blowing toward us instead of toward him, he wouldn't have come within hundreds of feet. As it was I think our dim smell—blown away though it was—more than our appearance made him uneasy and kept him from getting nearer. You see now why all the smaller animals, the weaker ones, have developed the power to stand perfectly motionless—simply to avoid being seen by the beasts of prey. And of course it never occurs to them that man's superior eyes, aided by his reason, can distinguish outline without movement."

Dorothy looked thoughtful. "I don't believe I'll ever care to take part in a fox hunt again," she said. "Of course, the fun of riding is wonderful, but the idea of turning loose a pack of hounds on that beautiful thing!" They sped on up the next hill and down into the farther valley and to the bank of a small, swiftly flowing stream. There were signs in plenty here of the wild life that thronged the region. She saw tracks not only of fox and caribou, but a wolverine had trotted along that way in the dawn; an otter had romped on the

muddy bank; and, at a crossing, she encountered a huge, almost triangular imprint that might have been the track of some legendary man-eater of bygone ages.

The track was fully twelve inches long, and sharp claws had cut deeply into the sand. “Nothing more or less than the great Kodiak bear,” Pete explained. “Maybe you don’t know it, but this is just about the last place in the world where the big Kodiak—whose hide is sometimes eleven feet long—can still be found in any numbers. Can’t you fancy the old warrior—booming along here looking for salmon?” But he was quick to explain that even these huge beasts would run from human beings a thousand times where once they would stand and fight; that, unlike the Alaskan brown bears of farther east and the grizzlies of the mountains, they were practically never known to make an unprovoked attack.

Thence they followed the stream clear up into the higher hills. The stream itself constantly narrowed until it was merely a rivulet flowing in a deeply-cut gully, far below them. Dorothy was thankful for her sturdy training on court and golf green before she got halfway up that long, steep-sloping ridge. She was active and athletic, yet she had to stop every few minutes for breath.

“How far do you want to go?” she asked him in one of these rests.

“I hoped to go quite a little farther. We’re not more than a mile from camp, and two miles is our limit. I’d rather hoped we could reach the top of the ridge. Do you want to turn back?”

She looked up at the rocky backbone of the ridge that still towered grandly above them—its imposing elevation manifest by scattered patches of last winter’s snows—and then into Pete’s brown face. She hated to give up when this tall guide of hers expected her to go on. She was a sportswoman at heart, and she flashed him a smile.

“We’ll plug on up,” she told him.

They went on, and now the stream was but a silver thread far below them in the dark gully, and the gully itself was crusted over at intervals by last year’s snow. Sometimes they skirted alder thickets, sometimes crossed wide grassless spaces where old bear tracks made irregular depressions in the loose gravel and black,

volcanic ash; but at last they stood at the very windy crest of the ridge.

Almost at once Pete pointed out some curious white spots, not to be noticed at all by a casual glance, in one of the adjacent valleys. These were the caribou,—the veritable children of these mossy barrens.

They did not turn to the hunt at once. Dorothy needed rest before attempting the difficult stalk at Pete's side; so she seated herself on a grand throne of rock in the gray cliff and overlooked the country. This was ever a grim, merciless land, yet it had a quality of unearthly beauty.

Far below her the wide barrens swept down to the blue sea. Behind, the ridges mounted ever higher, with a queer effect of actual procession, until at last the high, sharp, white peaks of the Aleutian Range stood flashing against the cold, gray clouds. There was something pagan and aboriginal about the place that she had not seen even in the uninhabited wooded islands that she had skirted on the way through the Inside Passage. Perhaps the very absence of the sheltering forests helped in the effect. This land lay naked to the storm, the unbroken sweep of the wind, and the snows that would soon overspread and deepen in a great, white shroud of silence; bared to the cruel ravishment of the elements and to the light of cold, winter stars; while in gentler lands the punishment was borne by the tall, uplifted trees.

Other wildernesses had undergone a process of change and erosion that this land had not shared. It was not merely a fancy with her: a scientist could have told her that the far-flung Peninsula had indeed lifted up from the sea but yesterday in comparison with the vast age of the remainder of the continent. There was no reason why the lower hills and valleys should not be clothed in hardy spruce other than that the march of the forests had not yet reached here. The jagged peaks were not yet worn down, the cliffs and rock ridges were sharp, unrounded by the processes of nature; the whole tone of the mountains grim and defiant in a way she could not name. This was a vista of the young world, soon after it had taken form.

A savage place, as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted

By woman wailing for her demon-lover—

It would have been depressing, alone; and even the companionship of this lowly guide cheered her and consoled her. It was in some way too much for her; she felt inadequate to face it, in need of a strong, sustaining arm. It was puzzling how companionable she felt with Pete; how she could sit and dream in silence without feeling the absence of speech; how she seemed to fall into his watchful, brooding mood. She was, for the moment, perfectly at peace.

Soon after she began the long stalk toward the caribou herd, at Pete's side. They sped swiftly down into the valley, and then, taking shelter behind a thicket of alder, moved straight toward the animals. The last two hundred yards that would bring Pete into long-rifle range had to be made with laborious stealth, taking advantage of every rise in ground and walking in a tiring, stooped position. But they crawled at last to the top of a low rise that marked the end of the stalk.

Lying prone in the deep moss they peered over the brow of the hill. It was a very satisfying picture to Dorothy. The caribou are always beautiful animals; and the setting of the green hillside, with the heaven-reaching white peaks behind, showed them at their best. They were just uneasy enough to give an image of unquenchable vitality: the bucks tossing their huge, treelike antlers, the does timid for their fawns, every head lifted, keen noses trying to catch a faint, unfamiliar scent. The range, however, was about three hundred yards: a distance in which kills are made often in hunters' tales but rarely in hunting.

"If I'm going to have a chance, I've got to take a rest," Pete whispered. "I'm not an extra fancy shot—would you mind crawling around in front?"

She obeyed instantly, every nerve keyed up by the excitement of the chase, and it was quite like being a mighty nimrod herself to lie prone on the moss and let Pete rest his rifle across her body. She was spent by the long stalk, but she held her breath like a veteran while he took aim.

And the wilderness gods granted him success. At the rifle's sharp sound a young buck—a shimmering, splendid creature with horns

branched but once—fell stone dead in the moss.

The reindeer leaped, milled an instant, then swept off through the valley. The two hunters climbed down, and a few seconds later Pete drew the keen blade of his hunting knife across the shaggy throat of the fallen animal. The carcass was then drawn, the trim feet interlocked, and Pete lifted the entire one hundred pounds on his broad back.

There was one further, minor adventure to that first day in the wilds,—but not at all concerned with rifles and death. They reached the bank of a narrow, swift stream; and Pete, who walked in front, came to an abrupt halt.

He turned to her with no distinguishable expression on his bronzed face, and she stared back in return. “We’ve really got to get across this creek,” he told her. “And it’s too deep for your waterproof boots. How do you think we can manage it?”

“I’m sure I don’t know.” The girl hid a faint smile. “It’s too bad you don’t feel yourself capable of carrying me over.”

He plunged immediately into the stream, laid his venison on the opposite bank, then came tramping back. He picked her up seemingly without effort.

He chose his footing with scrupulous care, but she could not accuse him of loitering. The rushing waters evidently taxed his strength greater than she had guessed, for his nut-brown face looked somewhat drawn and pale when he put her down.

It was only an incident of the trail, and it disturbed her that, as she walked on toward camp, she could not get it out of her mind. It haunted her that she had lain with such comfort, with such a sense of security, on his broad chest; that somehow the moment had recalled the most dear, the most treasured moments of her life. She could not deny to herself that the wheel of her blood had turned at a faster gait and that her nerves quickened; but it was a painful and embarrassing admission. It did not please her that she could be moved, even vaguely and faintly, by this crude, rough man of the barrens. Yet, somehow, she had been caused to think of the lover of her girlhood. Memories, tender and dear, had been quickened to life.

To Pete the moment had been of nothing less than glory. He too

knew it was only an adventure of the trail, that it was but the image of a hopeless dream that must never—could never—come true; yet for an instant it had lifted him, as with wings, out of the valley of the shadow. Beauty and fragrance—a tenderness beyond thought—had been his as the beloved burden filled his arms, as the icy water eddied about his feet.

CHAPTER X

DOROTHY found, to her great surprise, that the days of waiting passed rather swiftly. She slept long in the mornings on the comfortable, rudely contrived grass mattress that Pete had made for her; she played cards with Ivan, and made many little adventurous excursions into the wild with one or both of the two white men. Ivan was consideration itself, always willing to beguile her with his marvelous music, wooing her with his finesse of ardor, fascinating her in hours of talk with the intricacies of his brilliant intellect and of his complex, marvelously attractive personality. Work on the grave was postponed until such a time as the casket could be cared for.

Yet she owed a great deal to the head guide, too. In particular he watched out for her material comfort, superintending the preparation of her meals so that every cup of coffee, every succulent breast of ptarmigan was exactly to her taste, keeping her ever warm and dry, refilling her mattress every day with freshly cut grass and keeping the fire bright every morning in the camp stove for her to dress by. She could not deny to herself the comfort he was to her; but she attributed it merely to the fact that he was a strong arm in a savage land, a protection against the crude forces of the wilderness that might easily overwhelm her.

It was not so easy to explain the instinctive comradeship she felt for him. Of course he was the one man of her own race in the entire company, and here—far from the cities of men—bonds of race were revealed as of surprising strength. She was down to essentials, and here, at the continent's end, race ties mattered quite as much as those of class, such as in any clime she would have established with Ivan. Race ties are basic, those of class insubstantial at best; and only realities could exist here where the storms swept in from the sea and the barrens were green under the gray sky. She did not believe for a moment that, had she met him in her own sphere, she would have taken any real personal interest in the head guide. Surely where class lines mattered at all he would have been merely a servant or else one of the great world of toil such as had always been beyond the restricted vista of her life. Surely in her own, well-ordered, graceful civilization—of which there was no finer in the

entire world—she would have never concerned herself about him. Yet he lingered in her thoughts more than her class pride liked her to admit. It was stretching race ties rather far to attribute to them solely the pleasure she took in his slow, courteous speech, in the unfaltering brilliance of his smile. She was not a snob and she was glad to admit at last that he had qualities of courage and strength, manliness and chivalry that would carry him far in any land. Perhaps he lacked in superficial polish—though of this she saw little evidence—but not in the basic traits that make for superiority.

From Pete's point of view the days went by in a single flash between the curtains of night; and he dreaded to his heart's depth the hour certain to come when the *Warrior* would roll in on the waves and carry Dorothy out of his life. His belief in her never faltered for an instant; she was and always had been the star of his East, the guiding beacon of his life.

His attitude toward Ivan was too complex ever to completely straighten out in his mind. In the first place he had deep admiration and unfaltering respect for this genius from the East. He was pleased and gratified by the man's attitude toward Dorothy; his own most chivalrous instincts seemed reflected in the Russian. Yet sometimes a sudden, white flame, strange to his sight and puzzling to his heart, mounted and paled in the thin, almost-beautiful face; sometimes he was appalled and estranged by a spark in the almond eyes, a gesture of the white hands; and sometimes he caught a fleeting expression on the classic countenance that wakened, in his own heart, a sullen, almost a murderous rage. For all that this was his dream—a consummation for which he had scarcely, indeed, ever dared to dream—he had hours so bitter, so lightless, that it seemed the very vital processes of his life must falter and cease. Once, on bringing fresh fuel to the little camp stove in Dorothy's tent, he found the girl in the Russian's arms.

She had just yielded to his lips, and she was convinced—at the instant that Pete appeared at the threshold—that in Ivan her destiny of happiness was secure. The dark-red hue in her cheeks had been accentuated by the swift leap of the red wine of her veins, she was breathless and enraptured, and she turned in swift resentment as the flap of the tent was drawn aside. But she was instantly cold, inexplicably appalled, as she looked into Pete's face.

She could not have explained why. The man looked drawn, as in the last stages of fatigue; but there was no conceivable excuse for her sense of shame, her strange drawing-in to herself and inability to emerge again into Ivan's warmth. The mood was nothing that she would trace to Pete. Pete was only a guide, soon to be left alone on these windy shores that were his home. His coming had merely wakened her to a realization of some curious, complex attitude toward Ivan of which heretofore she had been unaware.

On leaving the tent Pete walked straight past the camp fire on to the hills. He was profoundly shaken and unnerved, not from amazement at what he had seen—he had realized that Ivan and Dorothy were virtually engaged—but at the narrow margin by which the girl had missed irrevocable disaster. It had not been by too wide a margin that he had restrained a mad, tragic impulse to leap into the tent and shatter the man's life.

At that instant he had hated Ivan as he would hate a wolf that menaced his child. He forgot that the Mongol was within his rights, that he had shown himself a chivalrous gentleman in whom Dorothy had every chance of finding the happiness that Pete had prayed she might find. Only a primal hatred, a devouring, murderous wrath remained. He could only call it jealousy; certainly he could not justify it by a manly impulse to protect the girl from ravishment. She had gone into his arms because it was her wish and her need, and surely it did not lie with him, from henceforth, to stand guard over her kisses. He was of the dead past, and Ivan of the living present.

The upshot of it was that some of his self-confidence was shattered,—his belief that he could play this game through to its ironic end. He would be afraid of himself henceforth. Jealousy had been the direct cause of his downfall; he saw where it might easily shatter all he had built. It was no longer easy for him to be charitable to Ivan—not that the latter was in need of his charity—and the secret resentment that had begun to smolder in him might easily, on some little pretext, break into a murderous flame that would leave but ashes of the girl's hopes. Sometime he might be tried beyond his endurance; and he was very mortal, after all.

Indeed he had already shown himself of murderous hue. Paul Sarichef could rise from out the river's depths and testify to that. He

owed it to Dorothy not to put too great trust in himself: the storm of his fatal temper had all but wrecked her life once before, and it might now destroy what little hope of the future he had left. In spite of the restraints of civilization, of beautiful home ties and exalted position, his brute passions had once carried him into murder. It was going a long way to trust them in a land that brought out, rather than suppressed, the lawless and the primitive, yet he had deliberately faced the most dangerous temptation. Surely it was better that the *Warrior* return at once, and the last curtain fall on this drama beside the sea.

He spent a restless night after the incident, and his peace of mind had departed from him. For all that this was his last dream on earth—the only shadow of happiness that he dared to hope for—he felt that by all conscience he must cut it short. His trust in himself was shattered, and there was nothing for him now but to turn away from this camp where his love was and vanish among the desolate hills. His star would soon set, the tower of his only strength was tottering. Yet the hours passed, and he lay in his bunk, unable to reach up to this sacrifice of self. But if he had lost faith in himself, a higher, better faith had come to him in these years in the wild, and the basic prayer, the first and last cry of all mankind, came easily to his lips: “Oh, Lord, lead me not into temptation, and deliver me from evil!”

Yet it was a higher wisdom that temptation should come to him, in an unexpected form, before the day that he saw break over the eastern hills sloped down again to darkness.

The party of five had made serious inroads in the small caribou he had brought to camp, and partly with the idea of procuring fresh meat, and partly because he wanted to be alone with his bitter thoughts, Pete announced his intention of penetrating the interior on a hunting expedition. He wanted the rugged hills to himself to-day, and since Dorothy was lame from a stiff climb of the evening previous, it did not surprise him when she declined his invitation to go. Ivan, however, looked up from his book with heightened interest.

“I’m getting soft as mud from too much ease,” he said. “I believe I’ll go with you this morning. I believe I can crack down one of those caribou with my pistol.”

Pete stiffened slightly. “I don’t see how both of us can go, unless Mrs. Newhall wants to go too,” he said quietly, so not to be overheard by the two natives.

“True enough. It had slipped my mind for a minute. We’ll take the natives with us—I think it would be a good plan to kill several caribou, if we run into them, and try to cure them—in preparation for emergencies—and these men can help you carry the meat into camp. She’s safe enough by herself, isn’t she?”

“As safe as she could be anywhere in the world. None of the wild beasts of the region will come within miles of her, and there are no other humans.”

“I’ll stay and struggle with your book then, Ivan,” Dorothy said. “You four valiant hunters need not worry about me at all.”

Since Ivan insisted upon going, Pete welcomed the plan that the guides should come too; and not only for Dorothy’s sake but for his own. He could not tell what madness might be wakened in him should he venture alone with his rival into the solitudes. He was nervous, distraught, from the mental anguish of the night just gone; and the presence of the two guides would serve to keep him in bounds. Soon they filed away into the hills, Ivan leading with his pistol, then Pete, carrying his rifle, and the two Indians, unarmed except for their hunting knives, bringing up the rear.

They deployed like a squad of advancing infantrymen as they neared the first alder thicket, the two Indians remaining at the extreme right and following a deeply worn bear trail, like the ruts of an old road, that conducted them easily through the heavy barrier of brush; and Pete and Ivan seeking separate trails to the left. They were in file again when they reached the more or less open hillside, but because of greater skill at choosing the trail, the two natives were more than a hundred yards ahead of Ivan, and Pete was thirty yards farther in the rear.

At that instant Peter caught the unmistakable thumping sound of running caribou, and turning, he had a brief glimpse of a barren doe in the brush thickets behind. She had evidently lain quietly while the four men were passing, but catching the human smell that had streamed behind them, had leaped up and was seeking safety in flight. The animal was better than two hundred yards distant when

Pete glimpsed her again, running in a great arc up the hill. She made the poorest kind of a target as she leaped through the scattered clumps of brush, but eager to procure meat as near camp as possible and not to miss any chances, and perhaps slightly startled and out of hand by the animal's sudden appearance, Pete fired vainly at every opportunity. Whether or not he hit the animal at all he could not tell, for at the fourth shot she disappeared in the thicket almost opposite Ivan.

The echo of the rifle report rolled, dimmed, and was still, and the men stood in those queer, fixed attitudes that almost invariably follow any excitement. Presently Ivan beckoned and pointed into the brush thicket beside him.

"She's right in here," he called. "You must have got her that last shot. I hear her thrashing around."

It seemed entirely probable that the deer had swept through the brush thicket unseen and had fallen wounded but a few yards from Ivan. Pete started to grope for further shells; Ivan peered into the brush.

It seemed to the head guide that, as he paused, he could hear faintly the rustle and stir in the brush that came so distinct to Ivan; and he was not greatly surprised to see the latter draw his pistol and begin to fire in evident excitement. He supposed, of course, that the man was merely putting the finishing touches to the fallen caribou. No blame could be laid on Pete that he did not call a warning; he did not distinguish the real identity of the creature in the thickets until it was too late.

It was not a dying caribou that thrashed the leafy branches back and forth. The animal that suddenly bounded out of the thickets was a bear cub of that season, and it was squealing in mortal agony from the pistol lead. There was no danger in him; he was less than knee height and was desperately seeking flight. But Pete knew, and the Indians, appalled on the hill above, knew too that a squealing cub means an enraged mother not far off.

And in the wink of an eye the great, shaggy dam came roaring out of the thickets like an avalanche,—straight toward the hapless Russian.

Fear-ridden though she was, the she-bear could not seek flight

when her dying cub cried for help. This was simply the mother instinct, appearing in all creatures high and low, but particularly developed in these high, intelligent mammals, the grizzly bears. She charged with unspeakable ferocity and power, ears laid back against the burly head, fangs flashing, high shoulders rocking as the great, curved claws slashed through the moss. She was a huge beast —weighing more than a thousand pounds—and the power of those terrific muscles was beyond the wit of man to estimate. One blow of the great forepaw would shatter the most sturdy human body like an eggshell.

Ivan had never been in greater danger, nor was such conceivable. The two natives on the hill above instantly gave him up for lost and fled desperately, lest the enraged bear should turn on them. And in Pete's mind two thoughts flashed like rockets,— one of the white, pure brilliance of a star, the other so strange and sullen and red, like the sun seen through the smoke of a forest fire, that it seemed beyond the pale of heaven-born mankind. At that instant Pete knew surely that he had only to hold his fire, and Ivan would be torn to pieces before his eyes. In one little second this man he had hated in his heart would be utterly destroyed, blasted and broken at the edge of the thicket; never again to hold Dorothy in his caressing arms; never to claim her lips; never to sail away with her back to the homeland, to light and love and happiness. He would be lost to the world as Pete himself was lost. He too would know the night's cold, the storm yelling above him and the cold light of the stars.

No blame could be laid on himself for failure to stop the charge. He had but one shell in his gun, and he might have sore need of that in his own defence. From the position in which he stood it was a doubtful shot at best, not because he could not hit the great form of the bear, but because likely he could not reach her vitals. Any other wound save to the brain or vertebræ would only enrage her further: even a shot to the heart would likely permit her some seconds of raging, slashing destruction. Ivan was firing desperately with his pistol, and maddened by many minor wounds, it was wholly probable that the bear would turn toward Pete after she had struck her first enemy to the earth. In that case the guide's only hope would lie in saving his one shell for a shot between the glowing eyes or into the throat at close range; there would be no

time or chance to procure other shells from his pocket and reload his rifle.

Yet at the same instant that this knowledge came to him, his love for Dorothy commanded him as never before. It was tried in the crucible of his being, and the gold was left and the baser metals burned away. Her happiness had been his pilot star until now, and he must follow it yet even though it led him to his own destruction. Would he let his own base passions blur his sight and blind him to its beauty, lead him from the one course of manhood and decency over which it beckoned? Perhaps she loved this man, and thus he must fight for him just as he would fight for her.

These two opposing impulses, and all the thoughts that centered upon them flashed to his consciousness in the twinkle of an eye. At such times the brain moves like lightning, darting from cloud to cloud, at a speed unguessed; and the bear had not completed one forward leap between the time that Pete first saw her and that in which he knew his certain, immutable course. The light and the shadow had battled in his being, for one epochal instant of struggle; and then everything was suddenly clear and bright as if the sun had come out and showed him a wide, straight road. The infinite complexities of human existence were suddenly clear as light. He wondered that he had ever been confused.

His gun sprang to his shoulder. He looked along the barrel. The bear had reared up, preparing to strike, and at this range Pete could hardly miss the huge form: the question was whether or not he could reach a vital place. But at the crack of the rifle the roaring bear pitched forward, in unearthly silence, in the moss.

Pete had shot somewhat to one side of where he had aimed, but by good fortune the bullet had shattered the vertebræ and cut the spinal column. A great wilderness power was laid low, and she would not rise again. The rest was like a dream: Ivan shuddering, then pocketing his pistol; the fleeing forms of the natives; the hills unchanged against the gray clouds. This man was no coward—this son of Asia—and he was able to smile faintly as he turned to his rescuer.

“That was a good shot, Pete,” he said in a voice that hardly trembled. “I owe you some extra days’ pay for that. A few jumps more, and I’m afraid we’d have had two handsome gentlemen to

carry back to Georgia, instead of one."

But Pete scarcely heard. He was swept with exultation, not at the successful shot he had made, but at his sudden freedom from the dominance of his own passions. He need no longer fear his impulses. He had escaped from himself and had come out beyond, true to his ideals and his heritage of chivalry and manhood. He would not jeopardize Dorothy's happiness by any rash, selfish act; he could play the game through, gain what happiness he could, and then wish her well as she sailed away and left him to his waste places, the cruel passion of the elements and the scourge of the storm.

CHAPTER XI

ROUGH seas prevailed during the first five days of their isolation, and these were followed by a long period of comparative calm,—a pleasant change indeed, in Ivan's mind. The weather on the mainland, however, continued unsettled,—clouds that drifted in over the ranges, lowered threateningly and vanished; occasional showers followed by short bursts of yellow sunlight in which the wet moss steamed, rainbows bending down into the sea and thrilling Dorothy with renewed hope, and nights of bitter, penetrating cold. It was unpleasant, threatening weather, yet nothing to keep stout ships in from the sea; and at the end of ten days of waiting that which at first was only a vague fear became almost a certainty: that the *Warrior* had gone down among the island crags and would not return.

They had given her five days of bad weather in which to lie at anchor in some sheltered harbor, and five days more to pull up and make the run back to the rocky coast where they were; and even Pete had to agree that this was time enough. On top of this they waited a few extra days for good measure, an impatient wait that, on Ivan's part at least, was endured only because no other way was open. And now the castaways found themselves confronted by an ugly situation. As their hopes of rescue by the *Warrior* went down, the available supply of food likewise decreased, and autumn was dying in the land. The northern winter is a formidable prospect at best; and even such seasoned old wilderness men as Pavlof and Fortune Joe did not care to face it with inadequate supplies of food.

So one evening Pete called an informal council of war. "I'll admit we've got to do something, and we can't wait very much longer," he began. "We've given the *Warrior* time in plenty to get back, with some days to spare to take care of breakdowns—and we haven't as much as had word of her. It may be she'll get back yet—delayed through some more or less serious accident we haven't figured on—and again she may not. This is a port of missing ships, out here. I don't see how we dare wait much longer for her to come."

"Agreed," Dorothy replied promptly. "What do you suggest we do about it?"

"Let's sum it all up first, and see where we are. Let's assume the worst, that the *Warrior* has gone down, and that she went down before she got word to anybody to come and rescue us. Let's see first if anybody will become worried about us, and send after us. Of course somebody will—in time—but our plans didn't include returning to Squaw Harbor, and the winter watchman there won't give us a thought. Sooner or later Bradford and De Long, down in Seattle, will learn that the *Warrior* did not come into Seward, but she wasn't likely expected at any definite time, if she was expected at all, and it may be months before a search party is sent out,—a half-hearted search party at that, because they will naturally think we went down with the *Warrior*. After the same long period of weeks and months, some of your relatives and friends down below will become anxious about you and dispatch some search parties; but they will likely become discouraged by the same news—that we went down with the *Warrior*—and rank us among the missing." Pete did not add that this business of being included with the missing was an old game to him: rather he looked quietly, half-smiling, out to sea.

"But say they do come and search this shore: at least, it will be a matter of weeks and months. And weeks and months in this climate, and winter and with little food, is a deadly deal. We have only one pair of snow-shoes, and not near enough winter equipment to supply the five of us here on the mainland. Of course we may get picked up by a passing trader, but the sea lanes are quite far out here, pretty well out of sight of land. We can't rely on such a long chance as that. There remains the dory, and the difficult, more or less dangerous trip down the coast to some settlement.

"Of course, it's the only possible plan now; you'll agree with me in that. But our food supplies are already so low it wouldn't be safe to attempt the trip for the five of us. There will likely be long periods, days and days, of being tied up on sandy spits where there isn't a particle of fuel. To attempt that trip, you've got to have plenty of already cooked food—dried meat, canned goods, and things like that—and we haven't got 'em. It will be the toughest kind of a tough project at best, but we can't do anything else.

"We've got to get busy quick. The natives are already getting scared; they say they can smell winter, that it's going to set in early. I don't put my own fear into their mouths either—I'll stick it out as

long as you say—but these men are natives, and they have not white man's fortitude to hold them up. Now this is my plan.

"To-morrow you let me take three days' rations of grub—a Siwash outfit, the men up here call it—and start off across the Peninsula on foot. It's no trip for a woman, Mrs. Newhall; for you to go would be absolutely out of the question. I'll pick my way over that range, sleeping out at night, and down on to the Pacific side, where I'm bound to run into some native village or trapper's hut in a few days' travel. Then I'll get a hundred pounds of canned goods and come back here. Meanwhile the natives will go hunting and kill all the venison they can, which we'll dry over the fire—cut it into strips and jerk it the best we can. Then with that fresh supply of food, you two, with the two natives to man the oars, can work down the coast and out."

"And what will you do, in the meantime?" Dorothy asked.

"You can leave me a little flour and my rifle, and I'll make it through; when you hit a settlement you can ask a native to pack me in a load of grub. That isn't a very big boat, and your grub will be limited, the best you can do. Besides, there's a possibility that some one will come here to look for you, and in that case one of us ought to be here to tell him where to pick you up."

It was a good plan; she felt at once that it was the only plan. But when she tried to be hopeful, a deep wave of depression seemed to engulf her, a feeling of hopelessness, indifference to the future, almost as if old age had suddenly claimed her. Perhaps it was merely an outgrowth of a hidden fear of the difficult, dangerous journey that waited her in the open dory. Of conscious fear there was none.

Pete would be left here, then, to the desolation and the storm. What a fate for a man of his character and instinctive refinement! Even when she took up her old life anew with Ivan—in the gaiety that would drown her remorse and still the yearning in her heart—she would never cease to think of him, living out his life on this lonely shore, standing stanch against the storm; lifting awe-filled eyes to the tempestuous sea; misty—like a ghost—in the drifting clouds of fog.

"I don't see why it will be necessary for any one to cross the

mainland," Ivan said, in the hush that followed Pete's mellow, deep baritone. He spoke with considerable emphasis and urgency. "While you were gone, we'd just be eating more grub all the time. We'd better start in the dory to-morrow."

Pete shook his head. "It wouldn't be safe, with our supplies so far reduced. You must remember that while I'm gone the natives can be hunting and drying meat."

"Perhaps the best plan would be for you to stay and hunt too: jerked venison is a fine ration, and with the little we have here it would be all we'd need for the trip."

"But only one of us can hunt, because we've got only one rifle, Mr. Ishmin," Pete argued politely. "Pavlof can take that; of course, by careful stalking, Fortune Joe might get a head or two with your pistol. While they're doing that, I'll be getting a good backload of essentials."

Ivan hesitated, and his face looked yellowish-white in the fading light of day. "If some one is going to go, it had better be me," he said at last. "I can cross the ranges as well as you can." Pete's eyes dropped over the Mongol's graceful, yet powerful form, and he believed that this was true. "If help can be found, I'll find it—I'm not afraid of hardship, either. I've seen plenty of it, in my training for the Russian army. The great advantage of this is that the camp's supply of venison can be piled up twice as fast; while the two breeds are hunting and packing in, you can work at curing it. Otherwise one of them would have to be here all the time. You can take care of Mrs. Newhall and look out for her comfort as you've done previously."

Pete glanced at Dorothy to see what her face showed; but she was evidently neutral. "Perhaps Mrs. Newhall would not want to be left here—without your protection," he said simply.

"On the contrary, I'm perfectly willing to do what's best for all concerned," Dorothy remarked. "If you think you can make the trip successfully, Ivan, and it's best for everybody, you needn't worry about me."

"I'm sure it would be best. You need Pete here to look out for your comfort, to dry the venison and to take care of the camp while the natives are hunting. I have every confidence in you, Pete; and

so has Mrs. Newhall."

It was true: there was nothing of the degenerate, the wild beast in the man who had been chosen to guide them in the wilderness. His instinctive chivalry was not to be doubted. "I appreciate what you say, very much," Pete returned.

"I do mean it. You've kept your place so far and I know you'll continue to keep it. You can watch out for the breeds as well as I can. We'll call it decided—only, if you don't mind, Dorothy, we'll wait one more day to see if the ship comes in."

Thus it was arranged, and now, as the night lowered, Ivan and Dorothy sat by the fireside at the door of her tent. Her gray mood of hopelessness had not yet lifted; and Ivan's most ardent wooing, his most brilliant discourse did not beguile her from her own, dark musings. At first she sat only dull and inert, depressed both physically and spiritually, as she watched the hopeless fight of the little, upward-leaping tongues of flame against the immensity of the growing darkness.

But soon she forgot herself in the eerie, imponderable air of mystery that the night had brought. Her imagination began to catch fire. Somehow she was near the heart of things to-night: there were profound, eternal secrets in the soft sound of the waves on the shore, in the whispering of the winds that confided together in the thickets, in the thousand, little, half-guessed noises that blend together and make the silence of the wilderness night. She felt small and fragile in the face of powers too vast and awful for her to name.

The natives' camp fire burned fitfully,—a smudge of dull red in the gloom. She could just see the long curves of the waves as they rolled and changed, ceaselessly, against the pale, late-evening sky. Swift clouds were scurrying through the heavens, and sometimes stars showed through their tattered rents, and sometimes the moon brought dimly the white glory of the distant peaks. There was a pronounced threat in the tone of the night she had never sensed before, as in the wind that blows before an invading, ravishing army. She felt that the very elements, long at peace, were assembling in battle array and would soon swoop down in fury upon these gray shores. She sensed the truth not only in those scurrying clouds, but in the lash of the wind that swept down into the fire's glow; the sense of impending disaster that haunted every

living thing upon that rock-bound coast. She felt baffled and estranged, and her thoughts wandered in little-known fields.

Ivan was always as sensitive as a delicate electrical instrument, and he also was aware of the sinister tone of the night. He was a brave man, and the only fear he had was small and dim, too obscure for him to fasten his thought upon; yet the deadly magic of the hour did not spare him. The voice of the land was clear to-night, and he found himself answering, to the full, its primal appeal; and in gathering himself to meet the onslaught of the raw forces of the winter that now threatened him, he seemed to strip off more and more of his Occidental veneer, and more and more the soul of Asia was revealed. Because it was his first need, his desire for Dorothy was immeasurably enhanced. He wooed her with a fire she had never seen in him before.

To-night he urged immediate marriage. When she asked him how, exiled as they were from civilization, immediate marriage could be brought about, he had a ready answer. “Can marriages occur only in civilization?” he asked. “It’s especially simple here—you know that Nick Pavlof is empowered to marry people. As you must have heard, he has some sort of right from the Greek Church—hereditary, I guess—and it holds good through all this end of Alaska. It wouldn’t be quite conventional, I’ll admit, but it would be holy, and it would stand. A license is not required when there is no way to get it—it’s just a legal record, at best—and if you wish, that could be handled when we get to Seward. Marry me to-night, Dorothy—then together we’ll go away—to Russia, to the South Seas, anywhere. If you say the word, we’ll lose ourselves in some savage native village on this coast and never emerge again. I’d renounce the world in an instant for you.”

She did not doubt this. His face was stark white; his eyes glowed like the coals of the dying fire. Her lips trembled piteously as she sought his hand in the dusk. “Don’t talk about it to-night,” she urged, almost pleading. “I’m so troubled—the future is so uncertain ——”

He looked straight into her eyes, as if he would hypnotize her. “You’re troubled only because you haven’t as yet made up your mind to accept me—a decision you are sure to make in the end,” he told her slowly, with deep emphasis. “You won’t quit being troubled

until you do it—because you love me in your heart. For this same reason your future seems so dark and uncertain. Dorothy, the women of my race are never troubled, because they put their destinies absolutely in the hands of the men they love. That's the lesson your western women have got to learn before they can ever find real peace, real poise. Dorothy, marry me to-night and put your destiny in my hands."

She would not hear of it, yet the idea disturbed her and stimulated her imagination. Perhaps that was the answer: to forget the hundreds of doubts and fears that oppressed her and place her destiny irrevocably in Ivan's hands. Her course would be settled then, and she would have to make the best of it. At least she would be free of the haunting, maddening uncertainty—the light and the shadow—the hesitancy and the faltering. Perhaps, after all, her alternate periods of happiness and despair were all born of a thwarted love for this distinguished man of the Orient; perhaps all her unrest was due to the fact that she loved Ivan in her heart and because of some erratic impulse—possibly her remorse for the part she had played in Peter's downfall and death—she would not let herself yield to him. If she turned, accepted his offer and married him here beside the sea, all her problems would solve themselves, if for no other reason than that all other gates would be closed.

"I don't want to think about it any more to-night," she told him earnestly. "Ivan, I wish you would play. Sometimes music is like a light, helping me to straighten everything out——"

He took the violin in his slim hands. "What kind of music?" he asked. "The 'Humoresque'——?"

"No. I don't want laughter in the midst of tears. That won't help. Play a song of *life*, if you know what I mean——"

"That means a song of death." He hesitated, then began softly the immortal "Elegie" by Massenet. This song of tears, deathlessly sweet, brought her very nearly to the answer of her problem. She did not actually come to a conclusion in regard to Ivan's suit, but she believed she found the reason why she had not yielded to him long since, and thus the source of all her uncertainty, her haunting doubts and fears. This was a song of the dead, and through the magic of its genius she was able, vaguely, to pierce the veil of death.

It was, indeed, a loyalty to Peter—mistaken, perhaps, but yet an emotion of great power—that had kept her from Ivan's arms so long. Partly this loyalty was an echo of her remembered love for him, partly it was born of her remorse for failure in duty toward him. And now that she stood at Peter's grave, the situation had reached its crisis.

But her thoughts reached further. A dim sense that previously had been too vague to put into concrete thought became suddenly an unqualified conviction. And the wonder of it brought a mist of tears to her eyes.

She heard the marvelous music through to the end, carried out of herself by its wailing beauty, moved to the depths of her heart. The last note died away; and Ivan, ever the genius, listened, rapt by his own magic, for the last, dying echo.

"Tell me something, Ivan?" The girl spoke quietly, her low, deep, beautiful voice tremulous with wonder, and the soft, starlike luster of tears in her eyes. "Ivan, do you believe in ghosts?"

It was no petty question, blasphemous in the holy spell of his music. She was deeply in earnest and he gave her an earnest answer.

"Of course," he said. "Who doesn't? No one can believe in immortality and not, strictly speaking, believe in ghosts. The whole world knows of them—not just believes in them."

"But do you believe they come back—to this earth?"

"Yes. I believe that too: every man does, in his heart. I don't even think it's a matter of conjecture."

"A great truth has just come to me." The girl was exalted. "I've known it all the time, but I just wasn't aware of it. Maybe that isn't plain. I mean that I've sensed it, subconsciously—all the time I've been here—in some back part of myself; and I can't imagine why I've taken so long for my conscious self to be aware of it. The music sent it home to me, just now."

"It often takes music, or some other stimulus to the emotions, to send home the truth. What is it?" he asked gently.

"Peter is watching over me. I feel his presence just as surely as if he were in the flesh."

CHAPTER XII

THEY were both silent as they thought of the immensity of this: the convoy by the dead. Ivan, always something of a mystic, caught fire at once and leaned toward her in deepest interest. “Peter’s spirit has held me up, all the way through,” she told him in a soft monotone that did not in the least conceal her emotion. “It kept me from being afraid, all these days—and has comforted me when the wind blew—and during those long hours that I watched for the *Warrior* to return. Of course he would be here—we’re just beside his grave. And I think the reason why I was so appalled and depressed at the thought of taking that long, dangerous trip in the dory was that it seemed to me he wouldn’t be there to watch over me. He wouldn’t go away from these shores.”

“It’s not very flattering to me—that the ghost of a dead man could be more assurance to you than I.”

“You’ve been a wonderful help too.” She paused, and her face was stark white in the dusk. “Ivan, do you think we could get a message through to him?”

“I don’t know.” Ivan spoke very softly. “The dead have been called back. What do you want to tell him?”

“I don’t want to tell him anything—I feel that he knows my every thought. But I want him to tell me something. I want to know that he has forgiven me for any failure in duty toward him—and I want his advice, how to go on.”

Ivan was fully receptive to her mood, and he sat a moment with bowed head. “We can try, Dorothy,” he said at last. “We can hold a *séance*—surely every advantage is in our favor. As you say, we’re just beside the man’s grave. Fortune Joe is a medicine man, and Bradford described what he called the spirit rite. He might bring a word through. Who knows?”

“Get all five of us, in a circle——?”

“The bigger the circle the better. Among the mediums of our country it seems to work like wireless—the longer the antennæ the clearer the message can come through. This black magic here is something the same. Shall I summon the three men?”

But they chose to walk together to the guides' quarters, finding the men smoking in comfort before their low fire. "Joe, isn't it true you are a medium?" Ivan began addressing the witch-doctor. "That you can get word through to the dead? Mr. Bradford told us you had that reputation——"

"Yes. Me talk with dead," Joe answered simply.

"Then to-night Mrs. Newhall wants you to try to talk with the man who lies buried here." He pointed to the cross, wan and ghostly itself in the pale light, on the beach but a short distance below the camp. "He was Mrs. Newhall's husband, as you know—and she wants to get a message from him. Will you be willing to try a *séance*?"

"Don't know *séance*. Sometime call—no answer. Maybe get answer to-night."

"You'll come too, Pavlof—and Pete. We're going to make a little circle."

Neither of these two men took these summons lightly. Pavlof believed thoroughly in ghosts, and a lingering trace of Oriental blood made him particularly subject to mysteries of any kind. To Pete, it was the crowning touch of the whole, fantastic tragic-comic adventure. He would sit in the circle that sought for his own soul in the void. Even as he held their hands, they would seek him in the clouds!

Yet there was a solemn air to the little meeting that was held straightway on the grassy land just above the grave. The medium sat between Dorothy and Ivan; Pete was on the other side of Dorothy and Pavlof next to him. Touching hands lightly, they sat intent.

To Pete, it was a scene never to be forgotten: the white cross just behind him, the tattered clouds racing across the sky, these four faces bent on the incongruous quest. Yet no one waited the developments of the evening with more eagerness than he. What if Fortune Joe turned out to be a real mystic; suppose he did, by his magic, succeed in establishing word through to the hereafter, and that he came back with word that Peter Newhall was not of the hereafter, but was sitting in the circle, alive and well! Pete felt that his situation was jeopardized as never before. Dorothy would only

need one hint; while it was true that as yet not one suspicion of the truth had entered her mind, it would all flash home to her in an instant, if ever her thought were turned in that direction.

There was no long, tedious period of waiting, to-night. Almost instantly Pete began to feel, in spite of himself, a queer tingling in his arms that slowly encompassed his entire body. He had been somewhat cold before—chilled by the sharp wind—but now physical sensation seemed to die in him, and he lived as in a dream. The whole circle was breathless and expectant.

Pete had a dim idea that some one was knocking at the door of his secret consciousness, trying to get in. There was a sensation of being drawn out of himself; yet the dream-like quality of the moment would not let him analyze it carefully. Fortune Joe had meanwhile gone into what seemed a half-trance: his head was bowed, his face white as if with unutterable agony. They heard him moan softly, in the utter silence.

"What you want?" he mumbled at last. "Me all tangled—spirit keeps floating up there, keeps coming back here. Who you want Joe to call?"

"My husband!" Dorothy answered quickly. "The man who lies here dead—under this cross!"

There was a brief spell of silence, then the native moaned again. There ensued a second of struggle in which liquid fire seemed to leap through the chain of their hands. Then Joe's trance seemed to deepen.

His head bowed as he seemed to grow limp. Then he lifted a blanched, drawn face.

"Dead man—he here," he said slowly. "Man—died in the water—lay under cross. What you want?"

"Ask him if he forgives everything," the girl whispered. Tears softened her voice. "Ask him if I am to go ahead—and do what Ivan wants me to do."

The medicine man's blanched face and subdued struggles seemed to indicate tremendous difficulty in getting the questions through, and hearing their answer. His face worked. "You make fun of me," he moaned softly. "You laugh at me——"

Dorothy cast one indignant glance about the circle, saw that every face was intent and sober, then pressed tight the native's hand. "Oh, no! We're not laughing. Get what message you can for me then——"

She waited in ineffable anxiety for this word from beyond the grave. "The man—he here," the native muttered, half-intelligibly. "He drown—cut up by rocks. He say—'change the name.' "

This was something concrete, and the girl trembled in the brooding mystery of the moment. "Is that all—to change my name?"

" 'Change name!' Me no get no more. Everything else all clouded."

Yet was it not enough? Dorothy did not doubt but that she had her answer. She had always known that messages from the departed came through with the most incredible difficulty; and she did not marvel that these two words were all the native could transmit. To change the name—and surely that meant nothing more or less than to yield her destiny to Ivan. The man who lay dead was willing that she should, by the fact of marriage, disclaim his own proud name and take the name of another.

They waited a while more for further word from the other side; but the medicine man seemed only confused and faltering. "Can you talk to Paul Sarichef?" she asked. "Maybe you can get in touch with him. I want to know that everything is forgiven—over there. That all debts are paid."

"You want me—call Paul Sarichef?"

"Yes——"

"Why, Dorothy?" Ivan whispered tensely. "He would have no message for you——"

"I want him to try, just the same," the girl replied. "Can you call him, Joe——"

The native was already calling; and all of them knew that psychic energy expended in that summons was beyond their wit to grasp. Fortune Joe seemed immersed in a terrific struggle that would seemingly rend the spirit from the body. His muscles hardened to iron, he seemed to writhe, lifting his body half off the

ground, as if in physical agony; his hands were icy as if in death. "He come," the witch-doctor muttered at last. "He no want to—he here soon——"

The muttered words grew unintelligible, then ceased. The circle waited for Paul Sarichef—Newhall's victim of months before—to speak to them from beyond the grave. Pete, yielding at last to the moment's magic, felt crushed beneath an unspeakable weight of dread. Yet to get the word back seemed beyond the medicine man's weird powers, for no further words came to his lips, his trance deepened, and the look of strain left his face.

"Hasn't he anything to say to us?" Dorothy asked, after a long period of waiting. Word of Sarichef's forgiveness was an urgent need with her. To Pete, the moment had a quality of actual terror; what message might that grim visitor from beyond the grave have for *him*!

But as he waited, Joe himself emerged into their familiar world. He was white and drawn; and he seemed more like a man drowsy with slumber than one who had pierced the greatest of all mysteries. The chain was broken, and he got up.

"Me no try any more to-night," he said simply. "Maybe some other time."

The girl gave him a smile of heartfelt gratitude. "Thank you for what you've given me," she told him earnestly. "You've answered my greatest question—I really don't need to know any more."

It was true; she felt that the one great problem of her life was solved. "Change the name." Such had been the message from beyond. There could be but one meaning. There was no need of hesitating longer. Peter himself, from beyond the grave, had urged her to the course over which she had faltered so long.

Ivan, at the door of the tent, read the truth in her radiant face. He reached her hands, then drew her slowly toward him. "Do you know now?" he asked, holding her and peering down into her luminous eyes.

No matter what his beliefs had previously been, she knew that the developments of the *séance* had moved him deeply, too. He had made the same interpretation of the half-muttered message from beyond as she had made—the only interpretation conceivable to

either of them—and he not only believed in it sincerely, but it had moved and thrilled him to the uttermost depths.

"I know now," she told him tremulously. "Ivan—you can have my promise, now I know that it's Peter's wish as well as my own. He wouldn't advise me wrong."

"Then I've won you at last?"

"Yes. When we come home again."

He would not urge her, to-night, for anything more. For the time being it was enough that she had definitely engaged herself to him. His plan of immediate marriage, the Russian priest officiating, could be discussed at another hour. He kissed gently, triumphantly, her soft, yielding lips.

From the door of his hut Pete saw their forms in the dusk, the girl's white blouse and the man's encircling arms. He guessed the truth: that this was the first kiss of their definite betrothal. Despair swept over him like a great wave of the sea he had once battled, but the madness, the haunting and torturing jealousy, was spared him now. He had conquered that; and he must never let it sweep him into hell again.

Her happiness had been his happiness, all the way through; and such must be his consolation now. He must give them his blessing—not hypocritically, not grudgingly, not with half-felt sentimentality, but with his whole heart and soul; otherwise he must forever burn at the stake of his own misgivings. When at last they sailed away, out of his life and out of this wretched, desolate land where he must live out the rest of his days, it must be with a prayer for their happy voyage, rather than for his own loneliness in the open places where he must make his solitary camps. He must wish them a whole-hearted godspeed.

They would sail soon now. Ivan would go for help within two days more, and when he returned, they would row away together out of his life, about the curve of the world and vanish at last in the haze. To-night was the beginning of the end.

He could not complain. It had all been worth while. He did not even feel resentment for the strange, ironic outcome of the *séance*,—the message out of the void that had made up Dorothy's mind and which had been attributed to Peter Newhall. Peter Newhall alone,

of all people on earth, guessed the possible significance of that cryptic message; and a grim, mirthless smile played at his lips, but there were shadows in his blue eyes.

CHAPTER XIII

AT the appointed time Ivan packed his supplies for his journey across the narrow, rugged Peninsula in quest of help. He took three days' rations, tied them up in Pete's light caribou robe, that was in itself sufficient protection from even severe cold, and strapped the pack on his lean, well-muscled back. Pete gave him ungrudging respect as he watched his preparations. Here was a man: the sharp, upreaching white peaks appalled him not at all, and he would wrestle with the wilderness powers as bravely and as successfully as Pete himself. The light pack was as nothing to that lithe, tigerlike strength.

"Pete, I'm leaving you to take care of Mrs. Newhall," he said simply. "I know you'll do it—as you've done before. She'll be wholly in your charge till I get back, and don't let any harm befall her."

"Don't worry about that," Pete assured him.

Ivan shook his lean shoulders carelessly, to settle the pack. "I won't be back for three days," he went on casually, with no emphasis whatever in his musical voice, "unless I choose to come back before—so I can't look after her personally. But I might say that if any harm *did* befall her, I would chase the man down, no matter what corner of the earth he fled to, keeping after him and after him till I got him. When I did get him——"

He paused, and Pete looked him squarely in the eyes. There was no doubt whatever that this man meant what he said, and no doubt of his reason for saying it. "That isn't necessary, sir," Pete told him stiffly.

"Well, I didn't think it was, but I wanted you to understand, in case you were tempted. I am a man myself, and I know what temptation is."

Pete's eyes blazed. "Temptation of that kind doesn't come to men of our race, unless they are perverts," he said easily. He was somewhat pale, but he lit his pipe with a steady match as he spoke. "I don't know about the inferior races."

Ivan smiled inscrutably. It was impossible for him to be insulted

by a man in Pete's supposed station in life, simply because such insult implied equality that Ivan would never admit. He might punish Pete for insubordination or lack of proper respect; perhaps he might kick him back into his supposed place; but the words of an obvious inferior could never so much as ruffle his complacency. "At some other place and time—perhaps just before we sail—I'll give you a chance to show whether the Anglo-Saxon is superior to the Mongol. It would be really diverting, for a moment. At present, both of us have work to do—you to take care of the camp and I to go after supplies." His voice changed and softened, but it had never been perceptibly hard. "Keep up the hunt for caribou," he directed. "The boys haven't done so well lately. Take care of the meat and cure it as fast as possible." Then he turned to say good-by to Dorothy.

He found her in an uncertain mood. She had overheard part of the significant conversation between Ivan and Pete—the first unfriendly words they had had so far—and she had been perplexed by a queer mixture of emotions. She was definitely betrothed to Ivan, she had made her bed and was resolved to lie in it, yet in this minor controversy she was unable definitely to take sides with her fiancé. When she tried to admire Ivan's cold deadliness, she found herself defending Pete's sturdy, Anglo-Saxon courage. When she tried to throw her sympathies to her betrothed, she found herself—to some degree, at least—championing Pete in her heart.

The thing puzzled her, and it mortified her too. At last she had to attribute it to race ties and race loyalty—matters with which she had never concerned herself particularly before.

She walked a short distance up the hill with Ivan; and her trust in herself and her love for him swept back to her to the full when he gave her a good-by kiss. What more could a woman ask in a lover than she had in him? A love which, though physical in character, would carry him to the ends of the earth for her, great personal charm, a brilliant intellect, great wealth and a finesse of breeding and manners that even the best of America—the Old South—could not surpass! This was all in addition to his genius, that which made him the envied of all the world.

"Take care of yourself, Ivan," she told him with a plaintive sweetness that carried him off his feet. "You are all I have now. I

have lost so much, and I couldn't bear to lose you."

They clung together, and then she watched him as he strode away up the hill. Sighing, she turned back to the camp.

She walked slowly, lost in her thoughts; and she halted on the hillside to look down at the camp. Instantly she found herself glowing with a kindly warmth that seemed to exude from her heart. There was an atmosphere of home about this rude camp. Indeed, for the time being, it *was* home, shelter from the storm and the night. She was surprised at the familiar manner in which she found herself regarding it, as though she had lived here years and her happiness was bound up in it. She knew in an instant that the glow that pervaded her was nothing more or less than the primitive love of home.

She had got down to essentials out here. She had felt the threat of the elements and the malevolence of the night, and she had found that even this rude tent, with the fire smoldering without, was something to be infinitely thankful for. Besides, her happiness was bound up in it. Here she had definitely accepted Ivan's love and given her own love in return. Yet she felt that she must not follow this thought to its logical conclusion, because it would only give rise to haunting doubts such as she had agreed to shut from herself forever. If her joy in the rude habitation was a mere matter of sentimental association only—that she loved it simply because she loved Ivan—she would not now be standing, glowing with pleasure, when Ivan was far away. Where one's heart is, there is home—but to-day her heart should be far away, trudging the barren hills with Ivan. She had to admit that there was some other, intrinsic quality about the camp that endeared it to her.

She saw the low camp fire over which Pete bent, cooking breakfast. Fortune Joe—merely a native now, not the seer he had been last night—was cutting wood with lusty strokes. The tent was warm from the camp stove: the sharp wind menaced it in vain. Suddenly she knew she would be wholly comfortable and safe while Ivan was away. She felt inexplicably light-hearted.

Pete had her breakfast ready when she reached the camp, and his homely face glowed when he brought it to her. He had taken especial pains to-day—venison liver fried with bacon, coffee such as her colored mammy herself could make, brown flapjacks not too

thick, served with maple syrup. His broad shoulders towered above her; and he was boyishly elated when he saw she was pleased.

The day wore on, and his care of her, his watchfulness, was a wonder. Although his work carried him far afield, he had cut fuel always ready for her hand in case the fire burned low; he personally superintended her meals, and he saw—with fine generalship—that at no time she was left alone with Pavlof and Fortune Joe. The latter Indian, he felt, was largely to be trusted; but he put no faith in the native priest.

When the day paled, and the dusk crept in from the sea, she appreciated his care more and more. She found an actual pleasure in watching his supper preparations, rejoicing in his agile movements, thrilled a little, in spite of herself, by the play of his back muscles under his heavy shirt; and she liked the way the fire's glow reddened his homely, weather-beaten face. . . . Some one else she had known, long ago, had in this same manner squinted blue, friendly eyes in too bright light; and the pucker of his humorous mouth, as he worked, was familiar some way too.

He took special pains with her dinner. He made reflector biscuits, thin and light, to be served with marmalade; he pot-roasted a fine canvasback duck that Pavlof had decapitated with the pistol; he fried potatoes crisp and brown. He watched her devour every mouthful of her portion, then after he had remade the bed and built up the fire in the camp stove, he turned to the task of washing dishes. Pavlof and Joe, meanwhile, were cutting into strips for curing the caribou meat they had procured in the day's hunting.

"I wouldn't mind washing the dishes to-night," Dorothy told him in a friendly tone. "Maybe you'd like to help the men take care of the meat——"

"Couldn't think of it," Pete returned. "If you'll excuse my saying so—I suspect you're not very experienced at it. But if you *should* care to help me dry 'em——"

They made quite a little party out of washing and drying the metal plates and the crude, iron knives and forks. They talked easily, almost companionably, and the time passed surprisingly swiftly for them both. And soon it was deep dark, and night winds were blowing from the sea. This work done, the girl started to turn

away.

But she halted; and he saw her girlish profile in the soft light of the camp fire. “Would you like to come and sit at the door of my tent a little while?” she asked. Her voice was somewhat tremulous; but she did not try to ask herself why. “I’m rather nervous to-night,” she went on hastily. “Perhaps that would make me feel more secure. Don’t if you have any camp work to do.”

Pete glanced about him. “Camp work is pretty well done, for to-night. I will smoke my pipe once at your tent door, if you don’t mind. Human companionship is very reassuring, very necessary in this North.”

She felt that he had expressed what she had groped for. “Anywhere, for that matter.”

“Yes. Anywhere.”

She went in and sat comfortably on her bed, while he sat at the tent mouth. They talked easily, surprisingly freely while the lesser stars were emerging, and his pipe paled and glowed and paled again in the gloom. She felt wholly secure and at peace.

“Sometimes there is a throwback in your speech, an accent or a choice of a word that interests me immensely, Pete,” she told him. “I don’t want to be curious—but curiosity is a very human trait, after all. Sometimes I’m caused to think that you must have known something very different from this—before you came here.”

“I did,” he answered quietly. “It’s nothing unusual, up here. This end of Alaska is a port of missing men. I don’t see why the police don’t look here first for them: a man who wants to get away finds himself up here before he knows it—or in South America.”

She could not question this. Her own husband had come here in flight; Ivan’s instinct had been to send him to South America. Yet she did not think that this man had ever been guilty of real wickedness. He did not appeal to her as that kind.

“And you are exiled from home?” she asked him bluntly. Yet there was no hint of vulgar curiosity in her tone. Pete knew that she asked because of sympathetic interest in him, such as is never resented by any normal human being on the broad earth. The night is too dark and the storm too wild for men to shut themselves away

from human sympathy. He turned to her with a grateful smile.

"Forever. But I can blame no one but myself. I guess I simply couldn't stand civilized existence. If you'd ask the trouble, I'd say—false standards."

This had been the cause of Peter's downfall too: false standards of which both Peter and herself had been guilty. "I'd know better, again," she heard him say. "I'd never sacrifice my birthright again—waste all I have. But that's always the song we exiles sing."

It was the same with her, too. If she had to do it over again she would never barter away her birthright for a mess of pottage. She had had all possible opportunities for happiness, but together she and Peter had wasted them; and no matter what she tried to make herself believe, no matter what contentment she would ultimately find in Ivan's arms, they could never come again. Tears flooded her eyes.

She dropped down further on to her bunk. The fire in the camp stove burned down to coals. She saw Peter knock out the ashes from his pipe—lightly, so as not to disturb her—and for an instant he stood, perfectly motionless, at her threshold. She was not afraid. A faint, pale glow through the air draft in the front of the stove showed him dimly, and something in the cast of the homely face, the half-obscured, dim, sober curl of his lips, suggested a tenderness that she had never, even in their most exalted moments, seen in the face of the magnificent man and genius to whom to-day she had given her promise. She had seen ardor, truly, longing and desire that bewildered her by its savage intensity; but she had never found real tenderness, innate instinctive chivalry. Every attention Ivan had ever paid her had been bent toward one end: that of winning her wholly and completely and in the way the Oriental wins his woman; he had never given her his soul's silent homage. She felt, at that moment, that from causes beyond her ken this humble man had seen fit to give her a blessing; and in all their associations Ivan had never blessed her.

"Good night, Pete," she told him simply.

"Good night, Mrs. Newhall." His answer came soft and moving from the darkened threshold. "Sleep good."

He meant that she need not be afraid of the dark. She could

sleep soundly, knowing that no harm could befall her. Though he himself stayed in the dugout, this humble man would be on guard through the long, empty hours.

As she drifted at half-sleep she was carried back to the first happy months of her marriage with Peter. She remembered his enfolding arms, and in them she had felt the same security that blessed her now. There was an infinite, aching void; but at least she could sleep in peace and in knowledge of safety.

CHAPTER XIV

THIS camp was home, but in Dorothy's mind it was a very empty and desolate place when both Ivan and Pete were absent. It is true that in her hours of solitude she learned more than a little of the mystery of the sea that rolled ceaselessly in front and of the everlasting hills behind, and through these, of the mysteries of life, but this did not wholly save her from loneliness. The tone of the land, coming true and plain to her ears, wakened an ardent need of companionship never fully experienced before.

So when Pete started to his hunting on the afternoon of the second day Dorothy expressed a wish to accompany him. The man's delight knew no bounds; and soon they were tramping side by side over the tundra. It was not the kind of day that one ordinarily chooses for a walk abroad. The clouds were sullen and gray, low-hung so that the white peaks of the divide were obscured, and the seas were gray in their shadow; a brisk inshore wind blustered at them as they climbed the ridge, chilling them, threatening them with the travail of the winter that would soon strike down. The threat of winter carried through the whole tone of the day: neither of them could mistake it. But they were not depressed, only made thoughtful and, perhaps, brought to a finer companionship.

She was not afraid with Pete beside her. She felt that he was a veteran, not only by personal experience but by race-heritage, of many long wars against such savage, wilderness powers. She found herself falling into his mood, forgetting—for the hour—that he was a servant and she the mistress. She forgot all barriers of caste and simply enjoyed the man himself.

The face of the wilderness had changed since she had last walked abroad. In the cold hollows some of the tall grass had been beaten down and lay in silvered snarls, the hills themselves had lost some of their bright-green hue; and the leaves of the alder were golden from the alchemy of the frost. "Soon these creeks will freeze tight," Pete told her, "and the snow will fall until this is just one great, glittering snowfield from the mountain tops to the sea."

As they climbed farther into the hills, and the sense of solitude deepened about them and the grandeur of the peaks went into

them, she fell ever more completely into his mood, and thus she was able to bring out some of his most treasured confidences, his most secret beliefs. He had undergone great stress—this man of the wild places—and he had had many lonely nights to meditate. Trial had built him up, molded his character, quickened rather than dulled his imagination, shaped his standards; and also it had immeasurably increased the depth and sphere of his thought.

"You wouldn't know this place in a couple of months more—maybe before that. You can look till your eyes are tired, and not see a living thing. Of course there *are* a few living things abroad—foxes and mink and otters—but they seem to stay out of sight. The big bears are under the snow and might just as well be dead. The ptarmigan and the snowshoe rabbits are too white to see, and the ptarmigans sometimes creep into the snow too."

"It's a dead world. It doesn't seem as if it could be part of the world at all—the world that moves, and is full of people. It's all like something dreamed of, long ago, and forgotten."

"You know, Mrs. Newhall, the forests never have the atmosphere of these big, rocky barrens. No matter how lonely you are in the woods, you always have the trees—big friends who were there before you were, who know all that you know and more, and who talk to you when you want to listen and are still when you don't. Little murmurings that the old-timers say you get to understand, after while; but when you do, it's time to get out, because you're heading for the madhouse from most people's point of view. Those big trees break the wind for you, and hold back the storms, and their branches shade you from the sun. If you'd ask me the first blessing of the wild, I believe I'd say it was trees.

"Even when the snow lies on them you remember them—you remember there's something alive there besides yourself, something that's fighting the elements the same as you are. Here the snow covers up the alders and hides them, leaving just a snow pile, and the wind yells across and nothing dares to raise its head. But we'll win in the end, Mrs. Newhall."

"We win——?" She noted the far-away expression in his blue eyes; and her interest quickened. "I don't know that I understand what you mean."

“I don’t know that I do either, entirely.” He smiled boyishly, but was instantly sober again. “Maybe I can put it this way: that life is going to win against death. We’re on the side of life, and the wind and the air and the elements are on the side of death. We made them work for us, after a while, but in the beginning they’re all against us. Every little living organism is a cousin of ours, and though some of ’em prey on us from time to time, and various living things prey on each other, we’re all fighting the same fight—the fight for life. Every little organism has in it what we have in us—the fire, the knowledge, the spark—you can’t get any name for it—that is life; the impulse to spread out and keep going. We’ve won over most of the world, but we’ve got plenty of fighting to do yet on this stormy Peninsula.

“Maybe I’m not making myself clear. In the beginning this was a peninsula of barren rocks that rose up from the sea. All the legions of death were in control then—the snow fell, and nothing was left uncovered, and the storms swept over it and there wasn’t even an alder thicket to check the speed of the wind. The elements ruled supreme! But soon moss began to grow on the rocks, and kept growing, no matter how hard the elements—the winter’s cold and the frost—tried to stop it. And you can be sure they did try, because that moss was a foothold that will beat ’em and conquer ’em yet. Then grass began to grow in the drier places, and little animals came that lived on the grass roots; and as the soil deepened, the alder thickets began to grow on the hillsides. Where does it lead to, Mrs. Newhall? Sooner or later the soil will deepen, natural drainage will ensue, and there will be forests here. It’s not too far north for forests to grow—it’s just too rocky and too marshy—and too new. Then there will be big trees in these empty spaces, and no matter how hard the elements try to smother ’em with snow, their tall tops will still rise up to remind them that they’re licked, that life has come here to stay.

“The battle is won when the trees come. They hold the ground until men are ready to come too, hew out their farms and build their homes—standing, some places, through the ages with their heads still lifted up in defiance, and still groaning and complaining one to another about how old and tired they are getting; and all the time the soil is getting deeper and richer, so that men can reap big harvests when they have laid out their farms. Trees are first cousins

of mine, Mrs. Newhall—big friends and big brothers that have held the fort! I don't like to see any one waste them or cut them down when it isn't necessary.

"In time, all this will be forested, and then it will be just a little while more until hard-boiled, hard-fisted frontiersmen come along this way, with their dogs and their live stock, and their lack of education in knowing how to give up. And then this won't be an outcast world any more. It will become part of the family possessions.

"Of course, the powers of death will keep on fighting, long as they can. They'll make things just as tough as possible for the first comers—the animals and birds—covering up their food in winter, persecuting 'em with storms. They'll lay traps for human beings too—volcanos to shatter the earth's surface and drown them with molten lava, bogs and snowslides, treacherous passes and hidden eddies in the rivers. There is always a trap for the unsuspecting. If they can't do anything else, they'll catch us out, sometime, away from shelter; and when we're too tired to fight lay us out with cold. No one ever knows when they're going to strike. But we'll beat them in the end."

She was rather sorry when a wolverine emerged from a brush covert and broke the train of Pete's thought. This was the demon of the waste places—only a small animal, truly, yet so savage and ferocious that he menaces the caribou fawns on the barrens and kills the otter on the beach. They watched him with the great interest of true nature lovers. Once they saw a black fox whose expensive fur was already long and dense in preparation for winter; and Dorothy found him even more to be admired here in his native setting—as he raced across a patch of old snow and shimmered in living beauty—than as a neckpiece in a fashionable fur shop in her native city.

On the high, windy ridges and just below the long, white sweep of the main range they flushed up a small herd of caribou. They were out of rifle range before ever Pete got sight of them, far across the gulch, and it was almost incredible to Dorothy how quickly they disappeared. The country was open except for scattered clumps of alder brush, and it would seem that she could watch them for miles; yet their graceful forms were out of sight in a moment.

“Too bad we didn’t see them in time,” Pete commented. “We’re going to need lots of dry meat for the trip out in the dory—and for my winter supply. And, by George, we might get them yet——”

“Chase them down?” the girl asked.

“With an airship, yes! That’s a blind canyon they are running up, and it’s an old caribou trick to come swinging back. Mrs. Newhall, if you want to be in at the death, you’ll have to travel quick——”

“Go on. If I can’t keep up, I’ll wait for you.”

So they started at a fast pace down the steep slope of the ridge with the idea of crossing into the valley and meeting the herd as it swept back. Almost at once Dorothy saw that she could not keep pace. Pete was traveling down hill in long, swift steps. Soon he was down from the first, steep pitch of the ridge and had reached the edge of a deep gully in which a small creek flowed, such as they had followed their first day in the wilds.

From where Dorothy stood she saw that the man was disconcerted. The gully was evidently almost an abrupt precipice, too steep to descend easily; and if he should lower himself down without mishap, the time required to climb the opposite precipice would make him too late to intercept the returning herd. He hesitated but an instant, then turned rapidly up the edge of the gully, seeking an easier place to cross.

He soon reached a bank of old snow stretching completely across,—apparently a thick crust such as often endures in these latitudes from one year to another over the cold, deep gullies. He turned to laugh back at the girl, waved his arm gayly—a vivid, cheering picture that the stress of civilization would not soon wipe from her memory—then started to cross.

Her first impulse was to shout a warning. Did he not know that often such snowbanks melt from the bottom until they were merely fragile crusts? Her instinct was to stop him at no matter what cost of her dignity and caste-pride; to run after him, crying; to order him back; to stretch her arms to him. Her fear was so great that it partook of the nature of actual premonition. Yet he knew what he was doing. This was his home land; and if he took risks they were on his own head. It was not for her to show such interest in him, a guide. Some shadow of her old false standards had hold of her yet,

and these repressed this noble impulse before she acted upon it. Partly through shame, partly through fear of what heart secret might be revealed to her, she strove to crush back the devastating fear that gripped her heart and to repel the cold of growing horror in her veins.

It was all folly, at best. The man knew what he was doing. He was advancing with some degree of caution at least,—one foot placed gingerly before he stepped. Surely if he let his zeal for hunting—always a passion with the Anglo-Saxon—carry him into danger, it was no cause for her to lose her cool poise on which she prided herself. Likely it was only a silly trick of the imagination.

Yet the shadow that had crossed and darkened her had been that of a predestined event. Her inner warning had been true; and with shameful falsehood to herself she had disregarded it. She had watched breathlessly, and suddenly she uttered a strange, small dim sound that the wind scattered into the vastness.

The elemental powers had been in ambush, just as Pete had said; and he had fallen into their trap. When he was halfway across, the fragile crust broke beneath his weight, and he dropped through as when the trap is sprung on the gallows.

CHAPTER XV

TO DOROTHY were left the hills and the sky, the steep crags and the alder thickets, many-colored by the whims of the frost. That strange mood of utter loneliness that she remembered from many a tragic dream settled upon her, weighing her down, seemingly about to kill her with its burden upon her heart, and with it a sense of absolute futility and helplessness. There was no special sense of terror, because the loneliness was itself terror in its last degree, and it pervaded all her being. She was all alone, lost as in a dream.

The images that her five senses portrayed in her mind tended to accentuate the mood of loneliness, rather than to divert her from it. She stood a solitary figure in an uninhabited waste: the empty barrens stretching down to the barren sea; the hills, gray with dying herbage, rolling on and losing themselves at last behind the curtains of the clouds; the gray, forbidding crags piled up in endless grim heaps about her. It was a lonely, utterly cheerless vista of dead sky and dead world, and the blast of the wind was too unvarying and monotonous to destroy the effect of silence.

Queer, vagrant thoughts chased each other through her mind. She watched the wind ravish the yellow leaves from the alders; they fluttered sadly in the air and fell rustling in the moss. She was all alone, under those cold, winter clouds. No companion stood beside her now. There was no pillar to sustain her failing strength; she was helpless under the lash of the gale, the cruel might of the elements. The guide whose strength and companionship she had come to rely on more than she herself guessed, who had stood between her and the persecutions of this accursed land, had fallen and vanished from the plane of her life. Her shield was broken, the rainbow of her hope had faded.

She was scarcely conscious of her own life as she stared down at the yawning hole in the snow crust through which Pete had fallen. Her thoughts were those of half-delirium—abstract terror, queer erratic fancies that were darkened and shadowed with a sudden, secret knowledge of the dread meaning of life. She had known *security*—the last dream, the dearest blessing in all the uncertain trails of life—but it had departed, and now she was exposed to the punishment of Destiny. Of course Pete was dead. Such chasms were

of fearful depth. The dull-red coloring paled slowly in her face, and she swayed as if about to drop down.

Yet she must not lose consciousness. It was part of the grim code of this grim land to fight to the last breath: such was part of the obligation of all living things. Pete himself had made that plain. Only by constant, unyielding struggle could life prevail against the cruel powers of death and darkness. She began to climb down the hill, stumbling, sliding in the loose earth, fighting through the alder thickets. Her delicate skin was scratched and torn; her hands bled from grasping the sharp rocks. Soon she reached the brink of the chasm.

One glance showed it to be more than sixty feet in depth—at the point she encountered it first—and a small stream flowed between great bowlders at the bottom. Here the banks were covered with a heavy, impassable growth of alders. She followed down the brink a short distance, then began to work her way down into the gully itself.

Half-sliding, half-running, in imminent danger of breaking her bones on the rocks at the bottom she made her way to the stream bed, then fought on up toward the place where Pete had fallen. The banks were too sheer to find foothold, so she walked in the stream, the icy water splashing over her as she slipped and stumbled on the slippery stones. Soon she vanished into a cavern formed by the snowbank completely bridging the gully. The shadows slowly gathered, the farther she went under the roof of snow until finally she groped her way in a curious, wan twilight that was like the grayness of a dream.

The gapping rent in the snowy roof above showed her where Pete had fallen. She made out a long shadow among the bowlders of the creek bed, and at once she knelt in the shallow water at his side.

She was too terrified, now, for coherent thought; yet a dim glimmer of a startling truth came to her as she groped for the man's bleeding hand. To her he was not merely a guide, a faithful servant. Her prayer for his life was heartfelt: indeed it seemed the first theme of her own life. All other hopes and fears paled beside the strong light of this. He was not just a fellow mortal who had given her service: he was her companion, her stronghold and shelter; but

this was only the beginning. In that instant of stress the voice of her heart spoke clearly above the confusing babble of lesser tongues, and some deep tenderness—almost forgotten—was thrilled into life. This rough man of the opens made an appeal to her that could no longer be denied, that reached to the secret places of her being. At that instant he was more than life itself.

The time might come when false pride would manifest itself again, and she would be ashamed of this heart secret that the fateful moment had revealed; but she yielded to it freely now. She was sobbing quietly, like a child in inconsolable grief, as she began to nurse him. She took his rough hands and kissed their wounds, then she kissed his lips to see if they were still warm with life. Then she pressed his battered head against her breast and rocked him as a child rocks its doll.

It was all strange and unreal, in the shadowed cave, in the wan light that poured through the hole in the wall. Outside the wind swept on in its tireless journey, hustling the dead leaves, shrilling over the crags; but it could not reach them here, in the stillness and the darkness. She was not aware of the cold water at her feet, of a red stain that spread over her breast from a long gash on Pete's brown forehead. She only knew that this battered body was, by some tragic witchery of the moment, her own; that—for this hour—her love for Ivan and for the memory of her dead was some way centered in him.

She kissed the homely, bleeding face, then tried to coax him back to consciousness. . . . They must not linger here, in the creek bed and under the cold roof of snow. He was not dead: she was sure of that now. As she mounted nearer the head springs of the little stream that flowed at her feet the gully itself had decreased in depth, and Pete had fallen scarcely more than thirty feet. The fall too might have been somewhat broken by striking first the almost sheer wall of the gully just above the water. Yet he might easily be mortally injured. His present deep sleep might usher him, without waking, straight into death.

She began quietly to bathe his wounds. The cold water was an effective stimulant, and soon he stirred and opened his eyes.

It moved her to the depths to see a little, faint echo of his friendly smile come to his lips. It was almost imperceptible, yet its

meaning was plain; that he would stand between her and disaster, that she need not fear. It had always been his impulse to cheer her, to save her from the poignancy of life. “Don’t trouble about me,” he told her faintly.

The drops of water on his bleeding face were not wholly from the cold stream. Her tears lay there too. “Don’t try to talk,” she cautioned him.

He closed his eyes, rested, and full consciousness came back to him. “I don’t believe I’m badly hurt, Mrs. Newhall—just shaken up and scratched. I hit the bank and slid part of the way. Maybe I can get up.”

“You mustn’t try it. I’ll run back for help——”

“I’m afraid it wouldn’t be best to wait. . . . It’s pretty cold down here—almost freezing. The best plan is to try to reach the camp.”

He spoke softly, with evident difficulty; yet she was convinced at last he was not mortally injured. She realized that life itself, however, might depend on getting him at once into camp. At least he must not be left under the snowbank to the mercy of the cold.

She took his hand and he tried to get to his feet. Evidently the entire mechanism of his central nervous system had suffered from the shock of the fall, and at first his muscles refused to respond to the commands of his brain. It was only with the girl’s help that he was able to get to his knees. Very slowly, unsteadily, pulling with his own free hand on the over-hanging roots of the gulch from which the soil had been carried by his sliding body, and leaning on Dorothy, he managed to stand erect.

He paused for breath and they met each other’s eyes. The fact that Pete had not been mortally injured did not mean that he was safe. He was at the bottom of a steep ravine, already suffering from the intense cold of the cavern, and weary miles of waste land lay between him and shelter. He could not walk unaided over the hills and across the barrens with such strength as he now had. He could not wait for help to come from the camp; hours would pass before the natives returned from their hunting, and hours more would be required to bring them here, even if Dorothy could find the way alone. Safety depended upon the fighting spirit, the courage and fortitude, of one person.

That one person was Dorothy. If she did not get him to camp and shelter, it might easily mean that cold and exposure would put out the spark of his life before the morning. For her the whole issue was suddenly immensely simplified.

There was no further time for terror and vain tears. For one of the few times in her life she had work to do. In that moment the engine of her thoughts halted to give freer play to the engine of her body. She began to fight for Pete's life as she had never fought for anything on earth before.

Encircling him with her arm and sustaining him against her shoulder she started away with him down the creek and out of the shadow of the snowbank. He was unsteady, faltering, and at first they could go only at a snail's pace. All the time she encouraged him with her words and her voice, and most of all by the pressure of her hand. And soon they were from under the snow roof and were seeking a path up the steep wall of the gully.

Without a word from Pete she continued on down the ravine until she found an old game trail that permitted fairly easy egress. This had been part of the guide's own teaching in their many excursions into the wild. The narrow, brown trailing path up the hillside was quite steep, but at least it was a way through the brush and offered them the greatest margin of safety. Slowly, laboriously, resting every few paces, they reached the crest.

The fight was not only to surmount the grade. She also had to guard against a lapse into unconsciousness on the part of the injured man, the results of which would have been to throw all of his dead weight against her and hurl them both down the steep grade in a perilous fall. Pete gave his own strength of will to this battle; and he was breathless and fainting when he relaxed on the crest of the gully.

"It's not so cold up here," the man told her, when he had rested. "There's no use of you breaking your heart open trying to half-carry me. I think you can leave me here and send the natives to bring me in."

Dorothy glanced at the white sky and heeded the threat of winter in the wind. Then she smiled into his eyes. "We'll go on," she said.

They went on, and that first, long, nigh-insuperable mile proved definitely the quality of Dorothy's basic metal. She found that she not only had spirit to endure; but that her physical strength itself was greater than she had ever dared dream. Almost at once she was desperately tired, face stark white with fatigue, muscles aching. What was a dull pain at first became burning agony in her arms and breast. It did not occur to her to give up, nor did she question why she should make such a heroic effort for this lowly guide. There was room for but one thought in her mind: that she must get him to the shelter of the camp at any cost.

Beyond her knowledge or analysis it had become a principle with her,—a theme beyond her sight but which was as much part of her as her heart or her soul. It was a cruel test to body and spirit, but even if Pete's strength had completely failed, leaving him helpless to fight in his own behalf, she would have won through. An unconquerable spirit moved in her to-day—its mystic origin she did not yet know or attempt to trace—and she would have got the injured man to shelter if she had had to carry him on her back. This was spared her, however, because after the first mile Pete slowly but steadily began to rally.

Ever his heart beat with greater power; the vital energy flowed through the floodgates of his nerves in an ever greater stream. He carried more of his own weight, depending less on the strength of his companion. When vivid consciousness swept back to him and he saw the girl's white, drawn face, he took her arm from his and tried to go unaided; but she would not hear of this. She drew his arm through hers again with a strange, tender urgency; and she would not let it go.

"But I'm all right now," he objected.

She studied his pale face and somber eyes. "Let me help you a while longer, Pete," she told him. "The less of your strength you spend the more rapid your complete recovery, and the sooner we can leave the coast and go home."

It was not exactly what she meant to say, yet she saw no way gracefully to retract it. It was better that he thought all her effort selfish, with no end in view other than a more speedy departure home, than to involve her in difficulties that might cost the most treasured secrets of her heart. She was afraid of what she might say,

and perhaps she was terrorized at what she might herself learn of her own heart's desires. Watching him intently, she thought she saw an odd quiver at his lips, a look of anguish that flickered swiftly across his kind, haggard face. Yet likely she only imagined it. He was only a guide, wedded to his open places.

"Of course you're eager to go," he told her. "I'll help you to get away at the earliest possible moment."

He meant what he said. Her brain whirled and her thought moved in unfamiliar fields the remainder of the way to camp. Down the steep grades, through the brush thickets, across streams and over hills she led him, sustaining him with the touch of her hand, leading him, cheering him with her voice and her smile. At last she laid him on his cot.

She built up the fire, with fast, eager motions, and heated a pot of water. Then, sitting beside him, she bathed his wounds. She did not know why he quivered at the touch of her warm, caressing fingers, or whence came the sea of tenderness that flowed through her finger tips upon him. The moment, to Pete, seemed actually to redeem and brighten some of the dark hollows in the trail of his life. No earthly event could wipe it from his memory; he had been starved for this, and he would know it again, in dreams, in hushed moments about his solitary camp fire; and the soft touch would warm him when the winter winds lashed him on the dreary barrens.

Dorothy helped him off with his wet boots, and still postponing the dread moment of self-analysis, tucked his blankets about him. Then she built up the fire and prepared a warm nourishing soup which she fed him, spoonful at a time. She did not remember that she was dead tired herself, that she was accustomed to receiving, rather than giving service; and she let herself forget, for the moment, that this man was of a plane and sphere far below hers. Unaware of her own aching muscles she worked cheerfully about the camp, tending to Pete's every comfort, warming his great, cold hands between hers, even cutting fuel to keep the fire warm at the mouth of the dugout. It was increasingly evident that he had received no mortal injuries, only a severe shock and some painful bruises and cuts, yet she found herself nursing him as if his life were at stake. The hours winged by, and night seemed to fall before its time.

It was only when she had gone to her own bed, tired out, and the two packers were on watch, that she dared scrutinize the events of the day. It was not merely that she had given heroic aid to Pete, lavish with her own strength and wracking her body with fatigue. She might have done as much, under certain conditions, to any one in need. The thing that amazed her, that distressed and terrified her, was not that she had helped him, but that in helping him she had found the greatest glory, the most exalted happiness that had blessed her since the first months of her marriage.

She could not lie to herself. She had loved to bear his weight down the rugged trail; and the touch of his hand had buoyed her up, out of herself and out of the despair that lately had engulfed her. She had cried for him and kissed him, and she had caressed him with her hands as she had washed his wounds. Even the hard labor of cutting fuel had not been odious; and just to sit beside him had blessed her with a calm, far-reaching pleasure such as she could remember from long ago.

Could there be but one answer? Was it her strange destiny that she should give her love—a love that the salt of the earth pleaded for in vain—to this humble renegade, a hopeless exile from the nations of men? Almost in the hour of her definite engagement to Ivan, the man who had sought her hand and who was worthy of the love she had so wanted to give him, was it her fate to learn that her heart had already been lost to another; that just as she was to find contentment in Ivan's arms this ghost should rise to plague her? And it was a ghost: the ghost of the love she had given Peter, months and years before. The guide called to some deeply hidden part of her that had been submerged for years; and it was all familiar, like something dreamed long ago. In this unhappy hour when she had given up hope of ever knowing transcendent, youthful love again, when she was beginning to know the hard face of the world and to accept its drab realities, when youth and dreams and tenderness had become empty words, was she to know at last another great love,—only to have it shattered in the clutch of circumstance?

She knew now why, even from the first hour, the grim adventure on this shore had been thrilling to her. She knew why she had befriended Pete even against Ivan, why his companionship had been so dear and his protection so comforting; and she understood

why her whole world had passed into darkness when she had seen him fall. The first caribou hunt, on her first day in the hills, had given her what had hitherto been an almost-forgotten joy; and every day since that joy had increased. Even from the first hour he had called to her, and she had answered. Evidently this love—and it could be nothing else but love—had been predestined, a thing of the instincts that all the barriers of caste and circumstance could not restrain.

But it must never, never be. Only tragedy lay that way, and she had had enough of tragedy. She looked at the matter calmly; and she knew her only possible course. She was no longer mortified and ashamed; it was not through any innate vulgarity that her love should go to this man of the open places. She was not blind to his natural nobility of character, and she knew that some way, somehow, her love for the departed Peter had come to life in him. Yet she knew she must instantly shut out all dream of him, deafen herself to his appeal, even repress the image of Peter that wakened every time she looked and thought of him. The two were connected, some way, in her heart; and she must forget him, and Peter too, in Ivan's arms.

The barrier between her and the guide was wholly impassable; and it must be forgotten like a vain dream. He was an exile in the North; she was of cities. He was of the storm and the windy shore, the desolation and the solitude; and she was of warmth and laughter and beauty. He was of another plane and caste, and never the two could meet. Besides, she had gone too far with Ivan to turn away from him. She had given him her promise.

She knew her course. In a few more days she and the man who loved her would launch their boat and row away; and Pete would be left on the desolate shore. They would never cross trails again. Slowly these strange, rapturous memories that already seemed like dreams instead of the living events of the hours just gone would pale and die, just as many of the memories of Peter had paled and died; his rugged, homely, yet ever-familiar face would fade in her remembrance; and the drama in the wilderness would be dimmed by the mists of the past. She would take up her old gaieties, and she would live for Ivan. In time the poignant pain would pass away, and she would find the normal contentment of marriage. The affair had not gone so far but that distance and time could soon obscure

it. It was only a dream at best, an erratic impulse beyond her analysis, and it was not too late to break sharply off and find full forgetfulness in Ivan's arms. With Ivan she would sail straight away, and gray seas would stretch their lonesome breadths between.

As soon as the Russian returned she would remove all danger by putting herself forever out of Pete's reach. Thus she would defeat her willful heart, cheat the enigmatic destiny that had jested with her so long, and perhaps find a humble share of human happiness.

CHAPTER XVI

JUST before noon of the following day Pete—who was resting beside the camp fire—made out a moving speck on the distant, inland hills; and close scrutiny proved it to be Ivan, returning from his quest. In half an hour he would be at camp and Dorothy in his arms.

Pete understood perfectly the full significance of this return. It marked, indeed, the turning point in his own great adventure; his personal watch of the girl would be over, and a few hours thereafter she would sail away. His blue eyes were lightless, and the clouds swept over the sun.

The one joy that was left him was to carry the good news to Dorothy and to watch the dear, remembered kindling of her luminous eyes. Her happiness was his watchword now, his one theme; and if he could not find his own happiness in hers he must forego it forever. He made his way quietly to her tent.

"Mr. Ishmin is returning," he told her simply, still in the character of Pete the guide. "He's in plain sight already."

The girl's lips parted, but her face did not at once flush with pleasure. Yet her expression showed instant, unmistakable relief. It was all that was needed to convince Pete that the girl had found her happiness; and he was persuaded that her tenderness yesterday, after she had brought him home, was merely an instinctive reaction —an echo of her almost-forgotten love for Peter Newhall—of which her conscious self made no interpretation. It settled everything for him; somehow it relieved him too,—that the girl should be so sure of herself and thus her happiness itself assured.

The girl looked breathlessly into Pete's haggard face. Fortunately he did not guess the full truth: that her genuine relief was not at having her lover come again, but only because it permitted her to escape from her own doubts and fears. She would accept Ivan's love and give more and more of her own love in return; and thus her course would be immutably fixed. Then, for no less a reason than that all other gates would be closed, she could patiently learn to find contentment and peace. Such had been her fate from the first.

She left the camp and trudged up the hill to meet Ivan. He waved to her, a motion brimming with vitality and spirit; and he was graceful as a caribou as he hastened to join her. Evidently the hard trip had left him unscathed. He was slightly more brown, perhaps, not quite so well-groomed if for no other reason than he had left his shaving kit in camp, but there was no visible trace of fatigue in his dark, handsome face; no change in his easy, graceful carriage. Here was a man, beyond all hint of doubt. He had met the raw forces of the wild, he had conquered them and escaped their ambushes; and they had left no burden on his jubilant spirit. The rough crags and the steep trails had been impotent against him.

He held the girl close, and she felt the steel of his muscles. There was a world of reassurance here. When she returned to her native city, Ivan at her side, when all the witchery of this savage land had paled into dreams, she had every chance to find a full share of happiness in these strong arms.

"Was the trip a success?" she asked, radiant from his kiss.

"Do you think I'd come back if it weren't? I had the best kind of luck. I didn't even get clear to the Pacific shore. A few miles this side I ran into a squaw, laying out a trap line. I got her to go back to her cabin on the coast and get a load of supplies for us, and bring it over as fast as she can—hard bread and canned goods and things we can use on the trip. She may get here to-night—she's certain to make it in by to-morrow morning. Then we can take the dory and start out—back to God's country."

"You started back as soon as you'd made arrangements with her?"

"Yes. There was no use to go on. She could bring all the grub she could spare without my help. Besides—I couldn't bear to be away from you any longer."

They walked arm-in-arm down to the camp, and Pavlof glowed at his master's greeting. "You've been comfortable?" he asked the girl.

"Perfectly. Pete has taken the best possible care of me."

"I'm glad to hear it. We'll add something fancy to his check when we pay him off." He followed Dorothy into her tent, and after she had told him of Pete's accident, he caught her yielding hands.

He was burning with a great idea, one that had thrilled him his lonely nights on the barrens. “Dear, I’ve come back successful, and now I’ve got something to ask. It’s the biggest thing in the world, but it’s for your happiness as well as mine.”

The girl tried to meet his vivid, magnetic eyes. By a supreme effort she shut from her mind the whisper of fear and the last lingering doubt, and opened her heart to his pleading. “I don’t think I can refuse you anything now,” she told him.

The slanting eyes glowed like great jewels in the eye sockets of a heathen idol. “We’ll be starting to-morrow,” he went on. “You and I and the two natives—Pete, I understand, is going to stay here and winter on the mainland. You say he isn’t injured, and we can leave him safely. Dear, we have a long, difficult trip before us. We will be tied up at various places on account of bad weather, we will have to fight storms and rough seas—it will be a cold, tough, severe experience the best we can do. Besides that, it’s really dangerous.”

“But why think of the danger? There isn’t any other course open.”

“That’s just it—there isn’t any other course. We can’t stay here much longer; winter is likely to break any day. We can’t wait any longer for the *Warrior* to return. But I’ve got a special reason for pointing out the dangers—dangers that only a fool would deny. It’s wholly possible, Dorothy, that the trip will actually put an end to us. There will be constant danger of sudden storms—of being wrecked and lost on the reefs. It’s a perilous trip, at best.

“It’s best, on a trip like that, that I should be able to look after you and be responsible for you in a much greater degree than I have on this trip. But the main thing is—that if we are to go down to our deaths in the next few days, we want to find the greatest possible happiness first. If we only have a few days to live—perhaps only a single day—and it’s wholly possible, Dorothy—considering the perilous nature of the trip—we want to live them to the full. I know a way that we can be sure of at least a few hours of perfect happiness—that death can never cheat us out of.”

“Be merry,” she quoted quietly, “for to-morrow ye may die!”

“That is the philosophy—the only possible philosophy. Not only to be merry, but to take all that life offers—and not let foolish

conventionality or propriety stand in the way. Dorothy, we love each other. We belong to each other. And there is no reason on earth why we should be kept apart any more.

"Pavlof is a native priest, as you already know. The marriages he performs are legal in all this end of the world. Licenses, as I've told you before, are just a legal record; they don't add one whit to the sanctity of the marriage vow. A marriage performed when a license is not procurable stands forever just the same, and all the legal end of it could be straightened up when we get to Seward. As for conventionalities—it is much more conventional to take that trip as my wife, even taking into consideration the character of the wedding service and everything else, than to go unchaperoned with three men. But that's just a detail. Ordinarily I would prefer to be married in old St. Paul's, as we have often talked of—with the flowers, and the music, and the beauty, and all that goes with it—yet you won't feel any lack of solemnity. The sea behind you and the winter clouds above, and those gray cliffs in front will thrill you as much as any vaulted ceiling of a cathedral. I don't know but that there will be something here that no church can supply; I'm not sure but that it will get home to me as no church wedding could possibly do. The sky and the sea and the hills—all the essentials—and the cross over Peter's grave!"

His face was stark white. Evidently the idea of this marriage in the wilderness had fired Ivan's imagination. It appealed to some primitive part of him that she had never fully understood, and to which she could not reach. His hands tightened on hers until her wrists were lashed with pain.

"I'd be willing to wait, for your sake, Dorothy—except for the fact we'd be running the risk of never having each other at all. No one knows what lies on the other side of death. The only happiness we can be sure of is that which we take now. I want you, the living warmth and beauty, and I know you want me too; and there's only one way to be sure of having each other. Dorothy, I want you to marry me—to-night."

His voice trembled with earnestness. He had put his case very well. Even in the beginning Dorothy was not a conventional type, and lately, on this rugged shore, she had come face to face with realities. Many things which she had regarded as essentials had

been shown as froth, and she knew that vows plighted under this white sky could be just as holy as those taken before the altar in her own church. It made no real difference that the priest should be an unlettered native, immersed in superstition that was all he had left of a great religion; their marriage would be hallowed only by the piety that dwelt in their own hearts. The marriage would be legal; nothing else really mattered. The ceremony was at most but a symbol; and where and by whom it was performed she found she absolutely did not care. And all the time he had pleaded with her she had been biased in his behalf.

He had shown her a swift way out from her own doubts and fears. Once in his arms, bound to him by vows, she could shut away the misgivings that haunted her. He would shape the life of which heretofore she had made such tragic use; and because she would be wholly his, all other roads would be closed. He would hold her heart, and keep it from wandering back to this stormy shore.

She was pale too, now, from the violence of her mingled emotions; but already he could see the nearing glory of his victory. He was winning; he read the truth in the clear, welling light in her eyes, in her trembling lips, in the hands that grew limp in his. His face, white as if with a great light, was close to hers.

"Yes—yes," she breathed at last.

"To-night?" he asked. "Or right now——"

"This evening—just after dinner. Just as night falls. We'll make it as respectable as we can—preserve at least some of the conventionalities. We'll be glad later that we did."

He sought her lips, already with an air of unquestioned ownership. His eyes were no longer vivid; they were strange and dark and inscrutable, and his voice was moving and deep. "Then you are mine—only mine. I've won you at last. Dorothy—it is part of the knowledge of our eastern women that the greatest happiness they ever know is in yielding utterly to the man they love. Tell me —aren't you catching an echo of that happiness now?"

She smiled soberly,—a wan, mirthless smile that was not without tenderness. "At least—I'm glad to know what I am going to do," she told him.

Acting on a hilarious impulse Ivan seized her arm and walked

with her to the mouth of Pete's dugout. The head guide, still not wholly recuperated from the shock of yesterday's accident, got slowly to his feet.

"I want you to supervise the cooking of an extra special meal to-night, Pete," he said. "The best of all the perishable things we can't take with us, and some of the others besides, if you need them. I want you to work all afternoon to get everything perfect. There is going to be a celebration to-night."

He was not aware that the girl's hand fluttered like a captive bird in his, and that she was pale as a ghost. Pete looked from one to the other; and there was no expression that man could read on his homely, bronzed face. "What—what is going to happen?" he asked.

He spoke rather softly, without emphasis, yet the sound moved Dorothy more than great music. She was instantly estranged, mystified; and no reality was left in the smoking, sullen fire, the white sky and the moaning sea. Pete seemed to be struggling for breath.

"There's going to be a wedding," Ivan announced easily. "Mrs. Newhall and I have just come to that decision."

Watching closely in spite of herself, Dorothy thought that the man recoiled, almost imperceptibly, and for one hushed instant his face was darkened by a queer, unearthly shadow such as she had never seen before. She had the weird feeling that some way that shadow was like death,—that it spread across the faces of men as their souls passed from the clay. It was a trick of the fancy surely; likely only an image of her own strange, dark thoughts; yet she was profoundly moved and she fought back bitter, blinding tears.

"You look solemn, considering the good news," Ivan reproached her lightly. "My God, Dorothy——"

But she caught herself with a visible effort, and smiled into his eyes. She must try to fall into his happy mood. Pete had turned away and had gone stolidly back to his bunk.

CHAPTER XVII

ALL the summer flowers were faded, but Ivan's ingenuity devised a bridal bouquet of scarlet autumn leaves into which strands of green moss were intertwined that was in harmony with their surroundings. With branches of alder, rich with a glory of golden leaves, he decorated the camp, covering up the unsightly piles of supplies, framing the door of the dugout and festooning the great rock before which he and his bride would stand, facing the cross. Neither Pete nor Dorothy assisted greatly in these preparations, Pete because of his weakness from yesterday's accident, Dorothy simply because she could not rouse the impulse to make this marriage a holiday occasion. Fortune Joe, however, worked with considerable enthusiasm, and Pavlof caught the contagion of his master's exultation and was delighted to the core.

Ivan shaved, bathed and dressed with care, and the two packers set out to serve such a wedding feast as had not been tasted since the American occupation. White breasts of ptarmigan, tender chops of caribou veal, baked clams and baked salmon would comprise the body of the meal; then there would be reflector biscuits served with canned honey and raisin cake. Fortune Joe contributed, as a surprise, a salad made of the white, crablike flesh of the devil-fish, and Pavlof prepared a Russian dish of doubtful content. In these hours Dorothy lay in troubled sleep in her tent; and Pete, in his dugout, sat gazing darkly out to sea.

Dorothy had been true to her promise to herself, and she had shut all misgivings out of her mind. She had decided upon her course, and she knew that only doubt and despair would follow any attempt to consider the matter further. Meanwhile Pete had searched Heaven and earth for strength to stand up under the bitterness of this hour.

Like Dorothy, Pete did not dare let his thoughts stray afar. His only vestige of salvation lay in a fervid belief that Dorothy was acting for the best—that Ivan would do well for her, and that she would find happiness in his arms—and he feared that such belief could not stand close scrutiny. It was not that, as far as principle went, he could see evil in the marriage. Peter Newhall was dead to the living world of men. This much was certain. The instinctive

horror that crept like a poison through him at the very thought of to-night's events had a deeper, darker origin.

He must fight it down. He must eject from his mind all his vague doubts, his strange, lurking antipathy for Ivan; and he must never, never question but that the Mongol's love for her was the great, gentle love that he himself had known and knew still. Only terror, only despair that could never end and destruction lay that way! He must shut away the terrible, prophetic pictures that passed in review before him: pictures of Ivan when his passion was cold and his ardor spent; of a cold, cruel face that now was flushed with victory, of neglect; of brazen infidelity; at last of a girl who wept alone. He could not bear to see Dorothy's tears, even in fancy. He could only trust to his star.

It was a bitter day, as if in tragic prophecy. The wind's blast was like a breath of death; it shrilled over the hills and fretted the sea in eddying streaks and dark, uneasy billows, and it blew the fine, stinging sand in invisible clouds. The fogs lifted and lowered, ghostly and wan; and any instant might bring the pelting sleet. They intended to hold the wedding feast in the open before the fireside, but this was given over as the lowering dusk increased the intensity of the cold. Pavlof served his fine meal with a flourish in Dorothy's tent; he and Fortune Joe ate in the dugout as ever. Pete himself complained that he was still ill from his accident, and the loaded pans passed him by.

To Dorothy it was impossible to believe that the appointed hour was almost at hand. The bleak day was dying; she had promised to go to Ivan in the dusk. Already the outline of the hills had softened, the alder thickets were becoming a gray blur in the lowering gloom, the myriad tones and hues of the sea were darkened and subdued. Only the white cross that marked the grave was still plain and bright. The twilight grew upon her like a sorrow.

Ivan smiled at her. "Is it time?" he asked.

"Any time now," she told him simply.

He walked over to the dugout and summoned Pete and the two natives. It was all very expeditious and simple. He placed Pavlof, his Russian pocket Bible that he could not read in his hand, directly in front of the white cross of the grave, just above where the

highest waves rolled on the shore. The other two men, acting as witnesses, stood at one side. Then Ivan joined Dorothy at the door of the tent.

"I'm going to play our own wedding music," he told her softly. "You'll enjoy the memory of it. What would you like?"

"Something not too profound. 'Oh, Promise Me,' if you like."

This did not represent the kind of music that Ivan personally preferred, and he secretly scorned this particular selection because of the many times he had heard it badly rendered; yet because Dorothy had asked for it, he would give it all he had. He took his violin from its case; then, standing in the twilight, the glow of the fire on his twinkling white hands and his rapt, almost-beautiful face, he began to play.

The sweetness of that old song brought tears at once to her eyes, but she did not let the melody transport her out of the grim, living present. She did not let her thoughts and dreams soar with her again, only to shatter her to earth. She was true to her promise to herself. It was a strange, weird picture: the fire that glowed and leaped in the dusk, the restless sea, the silent, watching witnesses standing beside the white cross that marked the grave. The song died away and the brisk wind scattered the last, fine golden threads of melody; and then, urged by some impulse of his artist's soul, Ivan began to play again.

He had played "Oh, Promise Me" solely for Dorothy, but now he was playing for himself, and partly perhaps for the man of his own blood who waited with open Bible at the edge of the sea. Something in the scene and the wind's wail had inspired him, and he chose a selection from the Peer Gynt suite, by Grieg. It was a wild, haunting thing, and in it he put his own passion, the mood of his own heart.

It was not a wise choice, if he cared for Dorothy's peace of mind. The song moved her and bewitched her, but also it frightened her beyond any power of hers to understand. That wild music became, through the magic of his genius, some way part of the night, the very voice of this wild, eerie savage land into which he was cast. The wind beat at her face, chilling and appalling her, and its threat was that of a great, white winter that was even now closing down upon her. No wonder Ivan made response to this land so far west

that it was almost east. He was of it, and it of him, and its mood was echoed in his heart. At that instant he was whole worlds and centuries apart from her. She saw him as the Mongol, his slanted eyes alight, devoured by his Oriental passion, lost in an alien ecstasy. She felt estranged, unspeakably terrified. Yet even now, as the music paled, she must stand beside him at this crude cross so white in the dusk. She must go to him, like a maiden sacrifice to some unearthly, heathen god. It mystified her, filled her with a poignant sense of imponderable prophecy, that the cross that marked the grave should be the only whiteness left in the spreading dusk.

She was hardly aware when the music stopped. The wind and the softer noises of the sea and the night continued its refrain. Ivan stepped beside her, then they walked together until they stood in the place where they would plight their vows.

In that moment Pavlof had become a figure of unmistakable dignity. He was no longer merely a packer, a degenerate descendant of many crossed breeds. He was the Priest, the high ambassador of the Church. He stood erect, his voice low and full of feeling; and it was plain that he considered this a holy rite, sacred to his heathen gods.

Ivan had not been mistaken in thinking that the ceremony would be impressive. Here were the eternal realities—the sea and the sky and the storm-swept shore—and the weird tone and quality of the night added to it an effect of dignity. The worship that throbbed in Pavlof's tone was real, even if it were mistaken, even though he had long turned away from the Light to bow before graven images. It was exactly the kind of marriage that Ivan, in particular, would have preferred. It appealed to his eternal sense of fitness, the attribute of his genius; and it lifted him out of himself like the passion of his own great music.

Very soon the vows were spoken, and ignoring the presence of the priest and the two witnesses, Ivan took his bride in his arms. Pavlof shook hands with them both, himself carried away by exultation, and Fortune Joe came up clumsily to offer his good wishes.

"We owe a lot to you," Ivan told him happily. "That message to 'change the name' that you brought through helped more than any

other thing to make up Mrs. Ishmin's mind."

Dorothy turned, her heart leaping, to receive Pete's congratulations, but the head guide still loitered in the dusk. In this same instant he was almost carried away by a half-mad impulse to take the girl in his arms for one kiss that by an old custom at weddings he might rightly claim. It would mean more to him than mere beauty and loveliness; it would be a memory to harbor in the days to come and it would some way exalt him in ways beyond his ken. It was not just a whim, a delusion; all his longing and his loss had some way centered, for the instant, in this; and it was suddenly a veritable need. Some way that kiss would be an enduring token of what he had been and what he had given, and it would help sustain him in the darkening future. But he repelled the impulse with an iron will, wondering, for the instant, if even to dwell upon it signified the first wandering of insanity. Such an act would only put him to needless trial, open old wounds. She would know his lips of old and feel the love that poured through them: he might, by one selfish act, risk the inviolacy of his disguise. Even yet it might cost her her happiness.

"Aren't you going to wish us well, Pete?" he heard the girl say in the dusk.

Her tremulous voice brought him to himself. "In just a minute," he answered as casually as he could. "I've got to get the camp ready for you first. After that, I'll give you all the good wishes that I know."

He turned, groping, into the gloom, and lifted his face to the doubtful mercy of the wind. It swept by him, chanting, into the fastnesses of the night; and he wondered if it would not blow out the wan flame of his own life. He had a feeling that oblivion was near; that somehow, because the need of him was done, the curtain would soon fall over his own existence. Surely it was futile henceforth; the drama was concluded, the game was through and the counters put away.

He felt that the will to fight on—without which he could not survive in this hostile land—had departed for good and all. Already he could glimpse this stormy shore without him, the wind shrieking by, unheard by human ears, the snow lying untracked, the storm venting itself in vain fury on the desolate hillsides. His four

companions would sail away on the morrow; and there might be a time of waiting—perhaps long years, possibly only months—for the final wind-up of his destiny, but the ultimate conquest of the raw powers of the wild was certain as the rising sun. The camp fire would burn out, smothered at last by the far-spread blanket of snow, and the last wisp of smoke—like an intangible human soul—blow away in the gust. Then the joke would be complete, and Big Chris Larson would have some days of company in the shadow of the moldering cross—before he was borne away—and then its false inscription might come true.

The game was played and finished. This now was only the epilogue of a drama that was done.

It was an ironic thing that the performance of his camp duties—not even now to be forgotten—must include the widening of the bed in Dorothy's tent where the wedded pair would lie. He kneeled and cut long grass, heaped it into a pile, and then loaded it into his great arms. Strangely dulled—partly from the events of the past hour and partly, perhaps, from the effects of yesterday's injury—he made his way to the door of Dorothy's tent through which Ivan and the girl had just passed. "Can I come in?" he called. "I've got more hay for your bunk——"

Ivan had just closed the tent flap, but Dorothy drew it quickly aside. Pete did not look into her white face as he stumbled in. Fortunately for his peace of mind, he did not see that she was pale and drawn as he had never before seen her. He knelt on the floor and began the work of widening her bunk. He built it up with all the care he knew, spread the blankets, then slowly stood erect. He turned with the air of a prophet to Ivan.

"We've talked intimately before," he began quietly.

"Yes," Ivan agreed. "Perhaps too intimately." He studied Pete's set face, and his brows lowered. "That doesn't necessarily mean we will talk intimately again."

"We *will* talk intimately again." There was nothing in his straightforward gaze and firm lips to suggest the underling; he had shuffled off, for the moment, the character of Limejuice Pete. "This is the last chance—you are going away to-morrow in the dory—I stay here. I've come in here to wish you happiness, particularly to

wish *her* happiness, but I've got something else to say too."

His voice was deep and moving, and Ivan knew that he could not help but hear.

"Your wife didn't ask me to say this, but there's no one else to do it—no one of her own kin who would have the right to say it. My right is that the girl is my own race, and I am hers—and there's no one else here who is her own race. I understand her because she's an Anglo-Saxon, and I can speak for her. We talked once before about race—which is the best breed isn't the question to-night. The point is—that they are a different breed. I know her because she's my own race—and race matters more than most people know. And because I've been out here—so far west that it's almost east—for months and years—I know you, too."

Ivan smiled, his thin lips closely pressed. "You seem to have forgotten you're the guide—not a family adviser. Please give Mrs. Ishmin your best wishes and get out."

They looked eyes into eyes. Slowly the look of scorn, of arrogance passed from the Mongol's face. This man might be of a lower social plane, of different caste and class, but Ivan could not doubt what he saw in the blue, steadfast eyes. This was no menial. He saw in him a worthy representative of a proud, unconquerable race. They were man to man, the East and the West, and Ivan looked and knew that he must listen and heed. He might hate him to the world's end—the East has always hated the conquering West—but he dared not scorn or disregard him. Pete's gaze neither changed nor lowered.

"I *am* the guide—I'm here to tell you that I've been her guide and protector for some weeks, now; and it's come to me that I want to continue to be, even after she goes home," Pete replied. "Just why this is so I don't feel the need of explaining, even if I could explain—it's enough that it is so. I want to be something more too. To-night I'm no longer under your employ, and I want you to imagine that I'm her real brother—instead of just a race brother. Ishmin, I know your breed, part by instinct, part by acquaintance, and I know you individually, and this is in the nature of a warning. Remember she's finer clay than you. I know your attitude toward women, but I want to say in this case you've married above you, forever and ever, and I want you to bear it in mind. Worship her,

and thank God for her, and be kind to her, every minute of every hour."

The girl tried to speak, but the words choked her, and Ivan's eyes glittered under his brows. "I heard what you said. You've gone insane. Now get out."

"One thing more. I'm not her only protector. This may sound insane, as you say, but both of you know it's true. Who gave the word that this marriage should take place?"

The girl spoke sharply in the silence. "Peter Newhall, my dead husband," she answered in evident awe.

"That word came from beyond the grave," Pete went on solemnly. He was partly acting on inspiration now—an urge that he did not know—and partly in a deliberate attempt to take advantage of Ivan's Asiatic superstitions. "Peter Newhall that was your husband is dead, but his ghost has been here all the time—both of you know it." The girl's eyes filmed with tears, and she nodded. "Ivan, the ghost of Peter Newhall is guarding this girl still. It will guard her clear to the end—I'm not a medium, as Joe is, yet I know that as well as I know anything. You can take my word for gospel. Worship her and thank God for her and be kind to her—and your soul will be saved. But at the first cruelty, the first infidelity, the first wickedness of which you are so easily capable—the ghost of Peter Newhall will hound you to your destruction!"

Ivan stared like a stricken man. Pete took a long-drawn, audible breath, then turned to Dorothy. "I want you to remember too," he told her gently, his eyes fixed on hers. "The ghost of your husband is watching over you—believe me, because it's true! If you ever need him, he will be there to help you. If you ever need me—your guide that is more than a guide—I will come, no matter how many seas I have to cross. All you have to do is to send for me."

To Dorothy, it was like an unearthly dream. She knew, with a sure knowledge, that this man meant exactly what he said; and she had been lifted up out of herself, out of her terror and doubt, and she had experienced a new sense of security and peace that could never wholly pass away. Already this seer was turning to go. His trembling hand was at the flap of the tent.

He seemed to be listening. As she watched, fascinated, she saw

the rapt look leave his face, and a look of common earthly interest take its place. He bent his head, straining; then turned to Ivan.

“It’s the squaw, I guess,” he said. “She’s already come with the supplies.”

They heard dragging steps; then the crackle of dead twigs that were strewn about the camp fire. Some one with a heavy load halted just outside the flap of the tent.

Pete drew aside the flap, and the candle light streamed out into the gloom. It was not an Indian squaw who had brought this backload of supplies from across the Peninsula. One glance revealed the stupefying, incredible truth. The black-bearded, stalwart man who stood without was Paul Sarichef whom Peter Newhall had supposedly drowned in the Savannah River years before.

CHAPTER XVIII

THERE could not be the least doubt of Sarichef's identity. It was not one of those curious cases of a double. All three actors in the drama knew him at the first glance, with certain recognition not to be mistaken. His clothes were rough and worn, but physically he was unchanged since Pete had last seen him on the launch on the Savannah. That fatal night! The thought was infinitely ironical. Here, in the flesh, stood the man of whose murder he had believed himself guilty and for which he had so dearly paid.

There was one instant of bewildered groping in the dark, and then he knew the truth. He had simply been the victim of a cruel, relentless, criminal mind. Ivan Ishmin, loving Dorothy with his Oriental ardor, had schemed to win her away from her husband; and he had known no law but his own. That he should have neither scruples nor mercy was wholly in character; he was a strong, profound, relentless man, and he had never been one to be swayed from his purpose. He had craved Dorothy with an unholy fire, his genius demanded to prey upon her, and when a drunken quarrel aboard the launch on the Savannah River had given him his opportunity, he had been remorseless in taking advantage of it. Sarichef had been told to disappear; Ivan had contrived the wicked lie that had been Peter's downfall. When Peter had wakened from drunken slumber he had been easy to convince that he had actually committed the crime that Ivan swore he had seen. Pete's only amazement was that this remorseless man had stopped where he did; that Sarichef had not actually been slain to add plausibility to his story, or he himself—by cunning, deliberate, carefully covered murder—wiped from his rival's path.

The flood of vengeful rage that might have been expected did not at once sweep over him, partly because the drama of the moment carried him above it, partly from sheer amazement at this incredible, unexpected visitation. He felt oddly cool, capable of deliberate thought. The moment was inordinately vivid, rather than dreamy; his realities still endured,—the clouds that hid the stars, the camp fire glowing dully, the wide bed of straw at his feet and the caribou flesh drying behind the camp stove. The moan of the sea carried through the moment, unbroken; and the wind still yelled

and blustered, flapping the canvas with maniacal frenzy without an instant's cessation. After one great start which seemed to be wholly internal—one single, violent impulse throughout the strong tree of his nervous system that showed not at all in his face or frame—all his powers seemed to rally, vouchsafing him not only perfect self-control, but a certain penetrative, infallible quality of thought. Outwardly this was Dorothy and Ivan's drama solely; neither in look nor word did he give any sign that he recognized Sarichef. Such action might immediately reveal his own identity. He looked casually into Sarichef's face, then stepped out into the firelight. He waited, with devouring eagerness, for the other two principals to speak.

To Dorothy the sight of that startled face that she recognized instantly as that of her husband's supposed victim was like a shattering fist at her breast. Her throat froze and she could not cry out; but instead of dullness and insensibility, a white light of super-consciousness seemed to pervade the scene; to her also the whole truth became vividly, cruelly manifest, and she was acutely sensitive, as in a death by fire, of all its tragic phases. Her hands clasped, her face was deathly white, ugly and haggard from unbearable pain.

At the same time her thought moved with a cruel clarity. She knew now why Ivan had urged Peter's flight instead of encouraging him in his first intention to stay and fight the murder charge through the courts. She saw now why Ivan had directed him south, clearing the way and arranging for his concealment in the Brazilian fastnesses: he had known that Sarichef had gone north and he had wanted to guard against a possible meeting of the two men. She understood why he had been so moved and stirred, like a man who has just come safely through an unseen danger, when he had got the word that Peter had died in the North rather than the South, and why he had opposed so bitterly and earnestly her own venture into the North in search of her husband's body: he had feared that she might encounter and identify Sarichef. Over and above the fact of this present meeting, it was a justifiable fear. The North has but a comparatively small white population, and they all cross trails sooner or later, particularly in this great, barren end of Alaska that was such a refuge for missing men. He likely knew that Sarichef was located somewhere in this immediate vicinity—probably on the

other side of the Peninsula—and therefore he had insisted on going himself on the expedition after supplies, rather than send one of the guides who might, not guessing the truth, encounter Sarichef, enlist his aid in his employer's behalf, and bring him back as one of a rescue party to the camp.

Her husband had been wronged and, she believed, indirectly done to death! He had been the victim of a wicked, deliberate plot of which she herself had been an unsuspecting instrument. Her remorse had been poignant before, but now it swept over her like the sea. The cruel futility of it all, the torturing sense of bootless loss seemed more than she could bear.

Ivan's expression hardly changed. His face twitched once; and it might have been that a mirthless, ironic half-smile hovered for an instant at his closely pressed lips. He walked more fully into the firelight, uttered one grim, subdued oath, then leered at his late secretary in contempt. It was not that he failed to recognize what this sudden coming meant to him and his. He knew that, except by Dorothy's loyalty to him, he could never go back to the civilized world again. He had risked everything, and he was done for, if the truth ever came out; he had gone on record in the Georgia courts as saying that he had seen Peter Newhall throw this man into the river and that he had seen him go down for the third time. He would be ruined socially and professionally, and in all probability the law itself would seize him. Fortunately Dorothy was his wife. Surely he would have vital need of her loyalty.

Himself, Dorothy, and Sarichef were now grouped about the fire; and Pete stolidly piled on fresh fuel. The flame mounted higher, crackling; and the head guide retired into the shadows just without the circle of weird, ruddy firelight. Then he stood waiting, forgotten and unseen.

"You fool!" Ivan began contemptuously to Sarichef. "What are you doing here? Blackmail, I suppose."

The man's blank face showed he was utterly baffled. He seemed to be fearing a blow. "I don't know—I can't explain——"

"You knew I was here. Of course the squaw described me, and you guessed who it was?"

"No. You know I wouldn't have come if I'd known that, if I'd

known it was you. I don't know why I came—except it was just because I couldn't help it——"

Ivan's vivid eyes opened wide, then the lids dropped again. "Out with it, man. You've cooked your goose and have done all the damage you can. Is it blackmail? If not, what are you doing here?"

Sarichef straightened and sighed. "I was living on the other side of the Peninsula. You knew that—and a few nights ago—I heard some one call me—some one told me to come here——"

"You've good ears to hear across the Peninsula!"

"I don't expect you to understand," Sarichef returned with some dignity. "I'm trying to tell you—just how it was. A few nights ago I got the idea that some one wanted me—here—that some one was calling me. It came just as clear as an actual voice. I tried to turn away and disregard it, but somehow I couldn't. 'Paul Sarichef, Paul Sarichef,' the voice kept crying—and it told me to come here, to this very spot. You know how a man obeys a hunch. That's what it was, I guess—a hunch—but I couldn't disregard it."

The grim smile flickered at Ivan's mouth again. "How many nights ago was this?"

"Four nights ago. I started the next morning, and halfway across I met old Sindy, with her back loaded with grub. She told me there were people here, needing help, and I offered to carry her pack on over and let her go back."

"Four nights ago!" Ivan turned and met the girl's fixed, startled gaze. "Dorothy, do you remember what happened four nights ago?"

"The *séance*!" the girl answered dully.

"The *séance*! You haven't forgotten, have you, that you asked to speak to Paul Sarichef—and that Fortune Joe called him? You remember how all of us felt the tension as he broadcasted that silent call? Sarichef was not in the spirit world, but he answered just the same. He came, and he doesn't know why. Was it hypnotism or some other occult thing, or was it just blackmail—who can say?"

But the wonder of this mystery could not long obscure the real

issues that faced this baffled trio in the fire's glow. They stood silent, as if listening to the sea and the wind, but their thoughts moved in sweeping circles. The two packers, curious but wholly failing to understand, moved and rustled in the darkness like wild beasts; and enveloped in a deep, strange calm that was reflected in his immobile face and quiet eyes, Pete watched the slow unfolding of the drama.

CHAPTER XIX

IVAN turned abruptly from Sarichef, and smiling faintly in appeal, stepped in front of Dorothy. Her wide-open eyes fixed on his thin, stark-white face; but her expression did not change, and she was so baffled and estranged by what had occurred that at first she seemed hardly aware of him. He reached for her hands, but she put them away from him.

"Don't draw away," he urged quickly. He spoke softly now, for her ears alone. "Dearest, you must forgive me."

"I can't forgive you," was her subdued answer. She spoke without inflection, almost in that muttered monotone with which one talks in sleep.

"You must. It's the only possible course. You must realize that. I don't expect you to forget right away—even to vindicate me until I've at least won you to my point of view—but you *must* forgive. Don't you see it was all for you?

"I am aware that I charged Peter with a crime he didn't do—that I caused him to flee, and that while he was gone he died. But Dorothy, this world is of the living. When people are dead they cease to be, so far as the living world is concerned. You have found happiness in me; don't lose it again for an evil done long ago. Don't let the dead past shadow the living present.

"Every man does wicked deeds, only most of them don't get caught. Many and many a man wants to do wicked deeds that he doesn't dare to do—to gain his ends. Other men have loved you, and have wished desperately that Peter would die and leave you free—but they haven't loved you enough—they didn't have the courage to make their wish come true. You know your Christian teaching—that there is no distinction drawn between him who wants to do evil and him who really does it. The thing I did many men would have been glad to do, if they had dared to take the risk."

He paused, and the girl started to turn away. Ivan held her gently, his hands at her arms just below her shoulders. "I don't want to talk about it," she told him.

“But you must hear me. Dorothy, I wanted you, and I had to have you. I loved you enough to risk my reputation, to do evil to a respected friend, in order to win you. Am I to be punished for that? Don’t you realize that this showed a love of which your Anglo-Saxon men would be wholly incapable? Poor Peter was the victim—but he has gone now, and you must seek your happiness in me, your husband!”

“My husband!” the girl echoed, as if the thought were incredible to her.

“Yes. You are my wife. You don’t owe any more loyalty to Peter—only to me. When you married me you took me for better for worse—and that means you take my past crimes on your head. You share everything with me, and that means you share my past too. It will go hard at first, and you will be bitter; but I want you to put it out of your mind. You’ve got to be my partner now, even in my evil deeds. Dorothy, I want you to respect, rather than scorn that quality of unconquerable purpose in me that won’t let me forego the things that I want; and particularly I want you to remember that it was all for you. The thing is closed and done, part of the dead past; and I want you to put it out of your mind.”

The girl straightened and sighed. “I wish you’d go away,” she said dully. “I can’t forget it, and never can, and I can’t forgive it. Everything is over between us. Now let me go—I’m going into my tent.”

His hand pressed more tightly at her shoulders, and he looked meaningly into her eyes. “Into *our* tent,” he corrected easily.

The girl shook her head; but her expression did not change. “No. I renounce our marriage. My door is closed to you forever.” At this point her slim body straightened, and her voice—though it did not increase in volume—took on a hushed, unmistakable tone of emphasis. “Understand everything clearly, Ivan, now as well as later. I don’t consider myself your wife from now on. I’m going to my tent—you must go to yours. Your hands have no longer any right to hold me. To-morrow the guides and I will go away in the dory, in search for the settlements. If you want to come you may, but it won’t be as my husband, and you must never appear in the United States again. You’ve asked me to choose between my husband’s honor and you, my husband’s murderer. I don’t see how

you can wonder at my answer. When I get home I will tell the whole truth and try to clear Peter's name, and take the smirch off his memory."

At this point she paused, faltering; and for one brief instant she did not know the cause of the sudden wind of terror that blew through her being, closing her throat and choking back her brave words. In that instant Ivan's attitude had changed. Outwardly there was little sign; possibly certain lines deepened on his white face and his vivid eyes looked dull red, like glowing, dying coals, under his fine brows. A wan smile, determined rather than cruel, curled at his lips.

It was not that he had misunderstood her words. He was not such a fool as to think this merely a burst of temporary indignation, soon to pass away. Dorothy had meant exactly what she said. Yet her opposition only made her more desirable to him, heightened the fire of his madness. His strong arms went about her, and he pressed his lips to hers.

Pavlof, who watched from the mouth of the dugout, grunted softly, as if in reflection of his master's passion. Pete made one uneasy move in the shadows, but he was not yet sure of his course, and preparations were not yet complete, so he paused, waiting for what might befall. Dorothy struggled in a sudden frenzy of hate and scorn, as if the kiss had ravished her integrity. For a single instant Ivan held her helpless—just long enough to show her he was her master—then he let her go.

"Oh!" she breathed. "You wouldn't dare——"

She halted because she was afraid to go on. Ivan was fully wakened now. He was shaking off the last vestiges of his conventionality as a dog shakes off water, and with it went the veneer that western civilization had bestowed upon him. This rock-ribbed waste of barrens beside the sea had always possessed a deep, stirring appeal for him; and to-night he yielded to it as never before. It called to his deeply hidden primitive side, and what was left him, there in the weird firelight, was altogether Asia.

The racial differences she had seen in him had been vague and of not great importance before; but now they estranged her and terrified her. The slant of his smoky, shadowed eyes seemed, in her

imagination, accentuated; she felt that the dread spirit of sleeping passion that was the soul of this strange, far-western night had passed to him, and was coming to life within him. The cultured gentleman, the distinguished, gracious social favorite that she had known in the South had passed away, in the fierce passion of this desperate hour, and only the Mongol was left, the ravisher out of Asia.

"I dare do anything—that is my right," he told her simply, no longer careful to lower his voice. "Dorothy, you are my wife. You are mine, and those kisses are mine. What I want I will take."

"But I told you I renounced that marriage——"

Ivan smiled, as if in perfect self-confidence. "You can't renounce it! A marriage lasts forever—from *our* point of view." She knew that he was speaking not alone of his particular tribe and country, but of the whole East. "You are my wife, legally and definitely; and never for a moment believe that this is a Western marriage. Please don't confuse me with a Westerner, or think that we will live by a Western code. I fancy you will find that we of the East look on womanhood a little differently from the men to whom you are accustomed, but you'll get used to it in time. I pleaded with you at first, which is not in the code; but I don't intend to plead with you any more. You are a Mongol's wife, and that means you will give what he asks, think what he says for you to think, and do what he says to do. In time you will learn it is the best way—to let your husband decide all these hard matters. Don't let there be any more talk of renunciation—of what you will do and what you will not do." He paused to steady his vibrant, tremulous voice. "Dorothy, we of the East do not worship womanhood in the way the Anglo-Saxon does—we only worship the beauty and the rapture we get out of womanhood. Such is woman's place—to give us that. When a woman marries a man of my breed, he owns her—body and soul!"

A sudden, upward-flaring of the camp fire showed the strange scene in vivid detail. It showed Ivan, his thin, almost-beautiful face strikingly pale and drawn from the devastation of his passions, his white hands tremulous with restrained power, standing beside the fire confronting the girl; it showed Dorothy, cowering from him, her beautiful hands clasped at her breast, her red mouth ugly and haggard from the extremes of terror, and every trace of her lovely,

dull-red coloring wiped from her face; it showed the dark forms of Sarichef, and the two packers at the shadowed mouth of the dugout, and Pete, at his watch at the far edge of the circle of firelight; it showed the commonplace fixtures of the camp, and, farther off, a thin white ghost with outstretched, arms that was the cross marked with Peter Newhall's name; and it showed faintly the alternate charge and retreat of the ocean's white-maned cavalry on the beach. Pete needed to look but once at the slight, cowering figure of the girl—pleading with hands and eyes, broken with terror and despair—to know that the affair was swiftly reaching its inevitable climax. An instrument long and dark, on which occasionally the firelight found a restless, reflected gleam, stood against the wall of the dugout, and moving quietly, he took it into his hands.

"You *wouldn't* take me against my will, Ivan," she pleaded, trying to convince herself as well as the obdurate figure before her. "Ivan, you have forgotten who I am—who you are. You are not a beast——"

"We don't consider it beastly, among the Mongols, to bend our wives to our will. I know what you *were*, if that's what you mean, and what you are now. You were an American lady, rich and great, spoiled by the weakness you Americans know as chivalry—but now you're a Mongol's wife, and therefore a Mongol's property. You are not supposed to have a will from this time on, Dorothy, except as you reflect *my* will."

He spoke in his usual rather quiet voice, yet she knew that the fire that consumed him was at a desperate height. He no longer attempted self-restraint. Asia was in dominance, and he moved toward her like a glorious tiger—the very spirit of Asia—toward its prey.

"If you hold me again, I'll cry for help," she told him, half-whispering.

"Cry for help, if you want to. I'll shoot Pete down like the Western cur he is if he dares to interfere. But I judge he's lived at this edge of the East long enough to learn not to interfere in a man's family affairs. Those men know I'm in my rights—even your chivalrous Southerners would know that, whether they pretended to or not. Allow me to convince you just what good calling for help would do."

He half turned and called quietly to Pavlof. His tone was unmistakably that of an imperious master to his slave; he might have been an Oriental sultan calling to one of the eunuchs of his harem. Yet Pavlof did not take offense. He hurried, fawning, into the circle of light.

"My bride here is a little unruly," Ivan said easily. "You know how it is, sometimes, Pavlof. She's just a little nervous and rebellious—and I might need a very slight amount of help."

Pavlof bowed slightly; but he did not speak. The lines seemed to deepen and strengthen on his dusky face as he waited for his orders; otherwise he gave no sign.

"We're going to change our plans, Pavlof," Ivan went on. "We're not going to the Outside, after all. I want you to be the head guide from now on, and I want you to guide us to one of the Esquimo villages—avoiding carefully all white settlements. This lady and I are going to lose ourselves among the natives until she learns to think differently along certain lines. She objects somewhat to going, and I'm afraid that for a few days, until she gets the right point of view, we'll have to treat her like a prisoner. I might need you, from time to time, to help guard."

Pavlof nodded, but he showed no disrespect to his master by even the slightest glimmer of a leering smile. There was no help for Dorothy here. He seemed to take this strange situation wholly as a matter of course, just as Ivan had known he would take it; and Dorothy glimpsed again the great universe that separates the races.

"Of course I can depend on you?" Ivan asked.

"Sure. She your wife. What you say goes."

"That's all for now. She might even attempt to escape from my tent to-night, but I don't think I'll need your help." He paused, waiting till the man moved back to his dugout. "You'll find the other breed's point of view just the same, Dorothy," he explained. "If you hadn't married me he'd be glad to fight for you. Now you're my wife he'll obey me. Of course Sarichef is my faithful servant—in everything. Are you convinced?"

There was no help here. Likely even Pete would admit the Mongol's ownership of her, body and soul. A single dry sob rasped at her throat, and she turned as if about to dart away in flight into

the night and the storm. But even this doubtful mercy was not vouchsafed her. Ivan moved toward her, a motion fast as the leap of a tiger, yet giving no image of great exertion, and his arms pinned hers to her side. Then, with no show of effort, he lifted her bodily and started into the tent.

Pete the guide stepped into the circle of firelight. His rifle rested in the hollow of his arm. His rugged, weather-beaten face was stark white.

"Put her down," he said slowly.

Ivan turned in infinite scorn, as he set the girl on her feet. He met the man's quiet, unfaltering gaze. He saw, dimly, that the hand that held the weapon was steady as a vice of iron.

"You're taking a dangerous risk, Pete," he said evenly. "Put up that gun and close your eyes if you don't like what you see, and most of all don't start anything that you can't carry through. I'll do what I like with this woman. She is my wife."

Pete's quiet gaze did not waver. The ruddy light poured over him. "She is not your wife," he said clearly.

Ivan opened his lips, and his arms were limp at his side. Dorothy uttered one long-drawn gasp that whispered strangely in the silence. For her the veil still hid the truth, but it was being swept away like mist before the blast of the gale. She felt just at the eve of some profound climax.

Ivan fought away an inexplicable sense of dismay, a vague, creepy terror that had penetrated to his heart. "Are you a fool?" he asked. "You saw me marry her. The marriage was legal."

Pete shook his head. "It was not legal. It couldn't be legal. She is Peter Newhall's wife!"

"*But Peter Newhall is dead!*" Ivan's voice was shrill and strange, not his own. A light grew on Dorothy's stricken face until it was a white flame, surpassing belief.

"He was dead to the living world, but he has risen," was the answer. "I am Peter Newhall."

CHAPTER XX

THE simple words, so moving and mysterious in the half-light, lifted Dorothy to the skies, out of the storm and the night, the despair and the terror never to descend again; yet she knew no particular sense of amazement other than that of her own blindness in failing to guess Pete's identity long since. There was not one fraction of an instant's doubt or question of the simple declaration. Before the undulation of the deep tone was dead in the air, she knew, as well as she knew the fact of her own life, that the man spoke true. For all his face and form were utterly different, his hands and voice and carriage wholly changed, this was Peter Newhall, her husband, in the flesh.

There was no time to dwell upon the wonder of it. She saw a swift shadow at the edge of the fire's glow—something that moved like a stalking wolf toward Peter—and she cried sharply in warning. At the same instant she sprang from her own place in an instinctive effort to protect her husband from that stealthy, murderous assault.

Her cry reached Peter not an instant too soon. Because his nerves were sound, and the ravages of his youthful dissipations wholly repaired, he was able to act upon that warning in the twinkle of an eye. There was no time for thought; as if by instinct he leaped aside, his quick eye caught sight of the figure that was even now poised to strike, and his powerful muscles made swift and tremendous response. Pavlof, faithful to the last to his demigod, had drawn a knife that flashed in a shining arc and started to save the situation in his own way; but Peter's rifle swung in his arms and the heavy barrel struck the leaping figure with shattering force. He crumpled in the moss, for the time being impotent and unconscious.

It seemed to Peter that the Russian's hand moved toward his hip; and he wisely decided to take the offensive. The rifle leaped to his shoulder, and the long, strong finger curled about the trigger, ready to exert the little, deadly ounce of pressure at the needed instant. Whatever murderous instincts had been wakened in Ivan were speedily repressed. Once before he had seen that rifle at that same shoulder—the day his life had been menaced by the charging

she-bear—and he remembered the sureness of aim, the lightning swiftness of fire. That deadly combination could not fail at this close range.

"I don't trust this bunch," Peter said roughly. "Put up your hands, Ivan. I'm not going to take a chance."

Ivan obeyed promptly; Peter was in a deadly mood. The Mongol was a brave man and a sportsman, yet he did not even attempt his old, grim smile of bravado. "You seem to hold the cards," he said simply.

"I'm going to continue to hold them, too." Peter gave a quick glance in search of Sarichef, finding him, appalled and terrified, in the shadows beside the dugout. The latter had left his rifle with the supplies in the dugout; and no shadow of opportunity remained in which to seize it and use it in his master's behalf. He threw up his hands at Peter's command.

Next Peter located Fortune Joe, also obscured in the shadows, and called him to his side. "Search all these fellows for weapons," he ordered simply, "and pile 'em up in front of me. Get Ivan's pistol first."

Joe obeyed promptly, and at Peter's command carried down the sacks of supplies that had been prepared for to-morrow's journey and loaded them in the dory. The weapons were similarly disposed of. Then, shielding Dorothy behind him, he backed down to the water's edge.

He helped the girl into the bow seat; then while he stood guard Joe shoved off. As the boat was lifted on the first, little wave he himself sprang in. Joe grasped his oars.

"Can we make it out?" Peter asked quietly of his oarsman. There was a tremor in his voice now; but it was nothing to cost Joe his confidence in him, or Dorothy her faith. The native knew him as a strong leader, a worthy representative of a great race. To Dorothy came the certain knowledge that as long as her hand lay in his, no rough seas need appall her, no moaning darkness fill her with fear. With such companionship as they had, as existed everywhere between well-mated men and women of their race, what heathen hordes could conquer them, what lesser breeds despoil them of their dominance!

Joe dipped his oars. “It’s a strong wind, but fair,” he said laconically.

It was a strong wind, but fair, that blew them down the Peninsula. Many the time they were menaced by reefs and up-jutting sea crags; often they were harassed by storms and obliged to seek shelter in the deep-cut bays, and more than once it seemed beyond belief that they would not be instantly overwhelmed. But always Fortune Joe’s good seamanship, assisted by Peter’s good nerve and strong muscles, brought them safely through.

It was a long, difficult, dangerous journey; but these were voyagers not to be despised. Dorothy, the daughter of a strong breed, had always had a potential strength with which to meet such tests as this, and with Peter beside her, the old curse of fear was largely lifted. Even if they had had to go the whole long way to the nearest settlement they would have overcome the dangers, won their race with winter, and come through. As it happened, the sea gods were favorable to their venture, and halfway out they encountered a sturdy launch sent from Unalaska to their rescue.

The *Warrior* had not gone down, after all. She had broken her wheel on the way to shelter that first day and, helpless against the storm, had been blown through the chain of islands and far out into the Pacific. Ultimately she had encountered a ship, had been helped into port, and had arranged by wireless for a rescue party to go in search of her passengers marooned on the mainland.

Ivan and his two followers had already vanished into the interior, probably on their way to some of the Esquimo villages beyond the bays, when the rescue ship touched at the scene of the late camp. Peter’s return home, his wife beside him, was accomplished in good time, and here both are hidden in the maze of human event. The straw that the guide Pete had cut for the wilderness beds was blown away on the winds, the cooking rack grew weather-beaten and was at last blown down, and the alder thickets spread and encompassed the camp. Soon there was little sign that human beings had ever passed that way. The caribou fed at the very mouth of the dugout, only occasionally stopping to sniff, in wonder, at the rain-beat ashes of the fire; the wolverine hunted with unabated ferocity along the creek bed; and sometimes the

great, surly Alaskan grizzly wandered through the camp, wondering, no doubt, what manner of his brethren had once had their lair on this lonely beach and why they had gone away. The waves still broke and rolled on the shore, but no one looked across them for a returning ship; and the wind blew, but no one was appalled by its raving. Only the white cross, seemingly spared by the forces of the elements, still endured,—a white emblem of eternity, perhaps a landmark for natives beating down the coast in their skin boats.

Again the elements ruled supreme; the snow lay untracked by human footprints from sea to sea, the wind swept unchecked by any human habitation. Yet their victory would be short-lived. As Peter had prophesied, in time even this storm-swept, savage land would be drawn into man's dominions. Peter himself would return some time. There was one duty still unperformed.

The matter was called to his attention the second night after they had boarded the rescue ship from Unalaska. He had stood on the deck with Dorothy, watching the eerie trail where the churning propeller set the sea alight; and the girl seemed wandering in a dream-world of her own. "There's just one thing that isn't clear," she told him, in the low voice that had haunted him throughout the years of his exile. "You remember the *séance*—I asked to speak to you. The message that came through was what made me decide to marry Ivan. It was 'Change the name'—just that: 'Change the name.' What do you make of it, Peter?"

He turned to her, and she saw that he was smiling cryptically. "The message was logical enough, Dorothy," he said, "if you want to believe."

"But you were there, in the circle——"

"You didn't ask, in so many words, to speak to me. If you did, Fortune Joe didn't get it straight. Surely you remember how bewildered he was, how he seemed at a loss. He didn't get any results until you told him that you wanted to speak to *the man who lay in that grave*. And if you want to, you can believe the message came from him!"

He knew by the touch of her hand and the luster in her eyes that she was deeply moved. "To change the name on the cross!" she

exclaimed.

"Of course. But perhaps it was just something telepathic, coming from me. Sometime we've got to go back and do it; it's only decent. Besides we want to visit again the land that brought us our happiness—cruel and savage place though it is. Dorothy, what matters and what doesn't no one really knows; and who can say but that false inscription on the cross matters more than nations or worlds to the man who lies beneath? We'll rub out the name Peter Newhall, and write in Big Chris Larson. Then maybe he can sleep in peace."

With Big Chris Larson the drama began; with him it ends.

THE END

Books by
EDISON
MARSHALL

THE VOICE OF THE PACK

"An unusually good tale of the West. The story is a woods-man's idyll, rich in its fidelity to the truth, and throbbing with the reverent love for nature."—*The New York Times.*

THE STRENGTH OF THE PINES

"The story is exciting in the extreme. Bruce Duncan encounters savage beasts as well as savage men . . . but no story would be complete without its golden thread of love, and this golden thread gleams through all with wonderful sweetness."—*The Boston Transcript.*

THE SNOWSHOE TRAIL

"Here is a living story of the snow-covered wilds of British Columbia that holds the attention unflaggingly, and by atmospheric touches constitutes itself as something more than a tale of adventure well told."—*The Philadelphia Ledger.*

SHEPHERDS OF THE WILD

"Edison Marshall has combined cleverly his knowledge of animal lore and an ability to write a swashbuckling story with its usual condiments of romance, forest fires and sudden death."—*The Philadelphia Ledger.*

THE SKY LINE OF SPRUCE

A splendid story of adventure, with its scenes laid in the Canadian Northwest. As always, Mr. Marshall draws the wilderness and its life with a sure and sympathetic touch.

BOSTON LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY PUBLISHERS

Books by
EDISON
MARSHALL

THE ISLE OF RETRIBUTION

"The Arctic is a new region for Mr. Marshall to describe, but he is artist enough to make us realize its beauty and its terror. We feel the loneliness of those seas which see one ship a year, of the mountains and glaciers, the sparse timber, the trap lines, and the wonder and terror of the strong Arctic animals. We thrill still to Ned's struggle with the Arctic wolf, and we do not forget the dreariness and desolation of the white land where the great Kodiac bear is monarch. Mr. Marshall has never told a better story than this of the evolution of the rich clubman into the wilderness fighter."—*The Boston Transcript.*

THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN

Edison Marshall is at his best when describing a struggle. In this story there is a double struggle—the fight of man to survive in one of the world's most barren regions and the equally desperate battle of two strong men of different blood for the woman that each loves well. "East is East, and West is West"—and here they meet with results that are dramatic. Mr. Marshall's many readers will find "The Land of Forgotten Men" one of his most stirring stories of adventure in the great out-of-doors.

THE HEART OF LITTLE SHIKARA AND OTHER STORIES

Contains the story that won the O. Henry Memorial Award for the best short story of 1921.

"Ernest Thompson Seton, a quarter-century ago, taught the world that there was such a thing as a realistic animal story. It is an unforeseen pleasure suddenly to renew that old but unforgotten thrill in these stories by Edison Marshall, who writes with that same unique blend of intuitive understanding and first-hand knowledge of the wild."—*The New York Herald.*

BOSTON LITTLE, BROWN & COMPANY PUBLISHERS

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *The Land of Forgotten Men*, by Edison Marshall.]

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE LAND OF FORGOTTEN MEN ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all

the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

> This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no

> restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary

form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK

OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and

distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and

credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.